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**Azadi Activists Abroad: Transnational Activism in
the New Kashmiri Freedom Movement**

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PhD

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

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ABSTRACT

The Kashmir movement for azadi, or freedom, from India is rooted in pre-Partition mobilisation, but has evolved over time. With the end to the violent resistance throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, a predominately nonviolent resistance has taken hold. The azadi movement has been redefined by predominately young activists with Kashmiri roots who have adopted strategies of other 'new' transnational social movements. This has broadened the support base from ethnic Kashmiris to include a demographically diverse range of activists and extends the framing of the conflict from identitarian-based to human rights-based.

Drawing upon Kashmir Studies literature and social movements literature, this thesis re-contextualizes identitarian motivations for the azadi movement. A combined theoretical framework aims to better understand how identity influences the movement and how transnational movements influence identity. This is best demonstrated through social movements framing processes.

Work with Kashmir Solidarity Movement (KSM) in the United Kingdom through participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and analysis of online social media corresponding to the groups has led to a better understanding of how identity motivates participants to support an independent Kashmir. In-group activists, or those with a direct stake in the conflict are motivated primarily by an affiliation to Kashmir; however, out-group activists are primarily motivated by identifying themselves as having some non-ethnic bond to Kashmir, such as being a part of a self-perceived minority group or active in a cause or campaign that challenges existing power structures. Legal advocates, activists, and academics have worked in tandem to raise awareness for the Kashmir conflict and recommend solutions. Using a rights-based discourse, activists frame independence as the only means for achieving justice for abuses and reclaiming agency.

Lay Summary

There is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan called Kashmir. Kashmir is actually a part of a larger body of territory known as the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which was once under the rule of a Maharaja – a sort of king – while the British occupied and ruled much of the South Asian Subcontinent. Although India and Pakistan



Figure 0:1 Kashmir Region Map with boundaries. Available at: <https://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/kashmir.htm>

have been claiming J&K for themselves since British withdrawal from the Subcontinent in 1947, many of the people of Kashmir would like to be independent of either country. The map here shows the current international boundaries as well as the disputed boundaries, known as the Line of Control (LoC) which has only ever shifted slightly after ceasefire agreements over the years since Partition.

There is quite a lot of literature that already exists that describes the history of the region and which focuses on the bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan, which as this map shows, territorial disputes also include China. This thesis reviews some of these accounts and offers referencing so that the reader may delve more deeply into subjects of more interest to them. The key contribution that this thesis is that it does not focus so much on the India-Pakistan conflict, but that it tries to look at the conflict through the eyes of the Kashmiri who desires freedom, or *azadi*. Other literature has questioned why Kashmiris would like to separate from India and/or Pakistan, but have often looked at it as an ethnic, national, or religious conflict of interest. Many Kashmiris I have met during a visit to Indian Kashmir, as well as during events and meetings held in the United

Kingdom prefer to see themselves as resisters to occupation, or as activists for human rights or the self-determination of a people. It is in this manner that I have chosen to tell their story as not one of ethnic or national conflict, but as a transnational social movement.

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INTRODUCTION

This PhD thesis explores the contemporary Kashmir freedom movement through the lens of transnational activism. Over the course of history and especially in the lead up to the Partition of Indian and Pakistan, a Kashmiri identity has emerged. This identity has emerged in response to oppression of a primarily Muslim and ethnically and culturally Kashmiri populace by the Dogra rulers up through the 1930s (Zutshi, 2004). The call for an independent Pakistan from India also encouraged movements for other regions, including the Kashmir valley, to strive for independence after British withdrawal from the Subcontinent. As a Kashmir identity had emerged, it was assumed to be a driver of the freedom, or *azadi* movement from India post-Partition when initial attempts to gain independence failed. An emergent, Kashmir identity is an identity marker that is salient in response to events such as the arrest of rights activists and the firing on protesting crowds, rather than a monolithic signifier (Rao, 1996; Aggarwal, 2008). Although rooted in historical precedence, this thesis focuses on the contemporary *azadi* movement which has gained traction as a transnational social movement.

This thesis draws attention to the issue of naming the *azadi* movement as an identitarian movement based on identity or religion as it is sometimes referred to in literature (Ganguly, 1997) or in Indian media (Ali et. al, 2011). The notion that the Kashmir freedom movement is a human rights movement whereby self-determination is expressed as a human right has emerged as evident in the eyes of activists. It is through the lens of human rights that this new *azadi* movement is expressed. I would argue the evidence of human rights abuses against civilians in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK), is far more compelling an argument for conflict asymmetry than a continuation of militant insurgency which was at least in part sponsored by Pakistan. The current phase of *azadi* is not. It is students holding placards and stone throwing youths versus well-equipped security forces. It is a demand for more rights and to end impunity, torture, abuses, and to account and atone for the disappeared and murdered Kashmiris found years later in mass graves.

Human rights is the narrative behind the contemporary azadi movement. Kashmiri freedom activists are framing their movement in terms of human rights through their accounts of victimization, but also through their demand for justice. The youth of Kashmir deemed the 'children of conflict' have grown up with debilitating curfews and being witnesses to violence. They are also rather transient. These transient Kashmiris have helped to facilitate the internationalization of the freedom movement by establishing university-affiliated groups abroad. This project follows two groups: The Kashmir Solidarity Movement affiliated with the University of Edinburgh in Scotland (KSM Edinburgh) and the Kashmir Solidarity Movement affiliated with the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (KSM SOAS). In the case of both these societies, neither has enough of a Kashmiri population to sustain a movement. Instead, the societies rely on support from non-Kashmiris to grow their movement. In fact, the KSM groups expressed as its primary goals to raise awareness for the Kashmiri cause. They desire to bring to light the atrocities witnessed by Kashmiris and the everyday rights which have been violated. They express themselves in a more universal language of human rights rather than an insular language of self-identity.

These findings were emergent rather than clear upfront. In my initial encounter with KSM Edinburgh, I witnessed heterogeneity and support for a myriad of campaigns within the group. The ethnic diversity was great as well as the diversity of organizations that seem to be openly affiliated with the KSM. I wanted to understand what drove people affiliated with the KSM to engage in a campaign for a free Kashmir? Were they engaging in KSM because of some identitarian appeal for a free Kashmir or do they engage for different reasons? As it appeared that this was a transnational social movement, I opted to explore these queries through the application of social movement frames. Observations led to an understanding that the overall appeal to be affiliated with KSM was the framing of the issue around an overarching human rights frame. However, branching out from this human rights frame are more nuanced variations of framing processes, which are explored further in this introduction and at more length throughout the thesis.

This introductory chapter first explores my personal inspirations for conducting this research as well as my contributions to the broader literature of Kashmir Studies and social movements theory. I then delve deeper into social movements frames and framing processes as this sets the stage for my approach to the research. I refer to general

literature on collective action frames, used as a tool to define a problem and outline solutions for the problem. I then consider the human rights framing as a sort of 'metapackage' which encompasses a broader set of sub-frames such as framing the specific issue of human rights around legal or injustice issues, for example. I end with a basic outline of the structure of this thesis. In brief, the first chapter outlines the historical precedence of the azadi movement and offers literature on the competing narratives of identity in the movement. The second chapter on research methods reflects upon my approach to research and my data collection strategy. The third chapter examines the new azadi movement and how it has led to a new generation of activists to seek freedom in more contemporary ways such as through using social media and modern art forms or through the expression of women's rights as human rights. Women's rights as human rights is one of the sub-frames of the master frame of human rights as it offers a compelling argument which asserts that women experience sexual violence as a result of occupation and calls for demilitarization of Kashmir. Azadi for Kashmir is equated with azadi for women against a patriarchy. The fourth chapter looks into some of the literature on diaspora on how the movement has become transnationalized. The fifth chapter departs from traditional diaspora literature to understand how the azadi movement works in solidarity with other movements in order to bring about stronger bonds between campaigns. Specifically, this looks at how the KSM acts in solidarity with other campaigns for people who are minorities or have a perceived subaltern status, thus representing a further sub-frame of human rights. The sixth and seventh chapters are more of a case study of my time spent with the KSM chapters, exploring the groups' origins, participants, and core issues and strategies. The eighth chapter explores the subframe of victimization. The victimized Kashmiri, however, is compelled to reclaim agency through acts of resistance, therefore representing the final subframe of resistance. Intersectional identities are explored here which aim to understand the overlapping and overarching identities which may be identitarian but also that of a resistance movement that is both a Kashmiri and as part of a broader liberal identity. As a transnational social movement, legal advocates and activists work together to frame the azadi movement in terms of injustice, or what I call 'legal framing.' This last type of frame offers an avenue within which to carry on promoting azadi to a transnational activist community.

Thesis Inspiration and Contribution

The contribution of this thesis is to the Kashmir Studies literature, but it is also to literature on social movements more generally. My research is based on ethnographic methods whereby I have positioned myself as a participant observer in two Kashmir Solidarity Movement (KSM) bodies in the United Kingdom. Both groups are affiliated with the university as a society and the two university groups I chose to work with were the University of Edinburgh KSM (KSM Edinburgh) and the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies KSM (KSM SOAS). My research findings are based on observations at the groups' meetings, interactions with the participants, and semi-structured interviews. I have further used their Facebook groups as a valuable resource for disseminating and promoting events and circulating information on what is happening in Kashmir, forthcoming KSM events, and affiliated group events and seminars. I also draw from interviews in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) in what was meant as a pilot study but turned out to be an intense, but short period of interviews. These interviews and encounters with locals have helped to focus my pilot investigations into the new Kashmir freedom movement and the more nuanced values of Kashmiris in their everyday lives.

I was unable to complete a longer period of research in (IAK) due to restrictions on accessing the region. Nevertheless, it was useful and influenced my research further towards breaking with nationalism or conflict studies and focusing on social movements instead. This was in 2013. Since this time, rather organically, social movements had become the key theoretical strand in understanding this new freedom movement. In particular, literature on transnational social movements organizations (TSMOs) was critical in better grasping the KSM and the contemporary azadi movement in general. Further, in breaking from more traditional literature on diaspora studies, social movements help to understand the way that self-determination movements may be disseminated and framed to an international audience in an effort to better promote one's cause. In the case of Kashmir, this has been done through the framing of the conflict in Kashmir as one of occupation and as an issue of human rights and justice (or lack thereof)

in Kashmir. Echoes of this are in Palestine, which is a big influence on protest tactics and dissemination to a wider audience. However, as seen through a microcosm in KSM, the group does not insulate itself from working with other groups. In addition to coreligionists in Palestine and Kurdish territory, the KSM has also expressed interests in supporting (and been supported by) movements for self-determination in Scotland, Tibet, and West Papua New Guinea. It could, therefore, be inferred that tactics of framing used in KSM are quite probably used in other self-determination movements in an effort to reach a wider international audience, rather than simply promoting their cause to coreligionists or to other ethnic kin in the diaspora.

In addition to understanding the framing tactics used and to extend social movements literature, this thesis also points to the gap in literature on diaspora mobilisation. Comparative literature on transnational diaspora offers insights as to how migrant communities, expats, and exiled or displaced groups can become a diaspora community with enhanced ethnic ties to a homeland (see Lyons and Mandaville, 2012 or Orjuela 2012). The only problem with this literature is that it can lead to the misconception that the diaspora is an insular or homogenous community. Sokefeld and Bolognani (2011) in their work with the Kashmir community in Britain found that the connections to homeland were less a consequence of a homogenous ethnic community than a response to events that occurred in the homeland and to the will to identity oneself as not from Pakistan or India. When not in relation to political mobilisation, someone from the 'Kashmir' diaspora may just as likely say they are from Mirpur, with more nuanced localized identities becoming more prominent (Ballard, 1991). Behera (2006), for example, warns against viewing Kashmiris as a monolithic group (104). Upon initial observations in the community, it was evident that the Kashmir freedom movement abroad was not homogenous. The movement did not fit with interpretations of diaspora mobilisation which required connection to a singular, or even an umbrella of communities. Vertovec (2009) does note the emergent 'hybrid communities' which form a sort of syncretic version of their ethnic heritage with their adopted homeland (7). The focus of this literature is on interpreting how mobilization of diaspora populations may occur in relations to events, or how their identities may fluctuate while living in exile. How diaspora is formed and re-shaped is not a key contribution of this thesis so much as how a seemingly diaspora problem becomes a campaign of significance to a multi-faceted alignment of divergent transnational communities. Some of the processes of diaspora

mobilisation were noted while working with Kashmiris living abroad, however, to label a small handful of Kashmiris as 'diaspora' would be dubious. Many of those active in KSM were only living abroad for the duration of their studies, and those that have lived in the UK for a longer duration were very much in the minority of the populations with which I interacted.

As far as working with a more representative Kashmir diaspora population abroad, this was already done by Ballard (1991), Ellis and Khan (2001; 2003) and Sokefeld and Bolognani (2011). It was not in my interest to repeat this research. What I was witnessing during my pilot observations and interviews was clearly not homeland politics in the way that it has been previously depicted. There is a dearth in literature that connects literature on TSMOs with that of diaspora mobilisation. This thesis also hopes to bridge that gap, again through looking at the way KSM reaches out to an international audience rather than focusing specifically on mobilising diaspora communities. It at once demonstrates the fluidity of causes and campaigns as being more about overarching issues about justice and rights and also recognizes that support of an international community of a broad spectrum of allies may be a better way to achieve their goals than turning inward towards their own ethnic communities for support. The chapter will further explore social movement theories in more depth, with a look into some of the crossover literature on transnational mobilisations. The literature specifically on mobilisations in the Kashmir diaspora will be addressed in more depth in a later chapter.

Introducing Research Questions

My research on Kashmir began with my wanting to understand the new Kashmir freedom movement. Like many other researchers, I was exposed initially to the ethnonational literature and general Kashmir Studies literature. This literature does not always analyse the situation in Kashmir as an asymmetrical conflict, which I had begun to come to see it as when looking through the eyes of the Kashmiri freedom activist. I initially wanted to know more about why Kashmiris were still trying to accede from India after so long, but this question becomes irrelevant if you perceive their cause not as one of secession but as a human rights movement. Having a deep interest in transnational social movements compelled me to attend the inauguration meeting of Kashmir Solidarity Movement

Edinburgh (KSM Edinburgh) in October of 2012. After seeing the variety of participants and viewing the BBC Channel 4 documentary *Trails of Torture* which documented human rights violations of Kashmir, my research shifted from exploring identitarian-based claims of Kashmiris to the right-based claims of Kashmiris. Furthermore, I wanted to understand how they brought in so many non-Kashmiris and people with no affiliation to South Asia to promote their cause.

What drives people in the KSM to engage in a campaign for a free Kashmir?

Already I have conceded that the azadi movement appears to be less based on identitarian claims than on human and legal rights and that the transnational movement sees itself as a vehicle in the fight for justice for Kashmiris negatively impacted by occupation. What is of further interest analytically is *how* freedom activists are mobilising and convincing others to mobilise. The KSM was not only easily accessible as a way to explore how freedom activists were mobilising but also in the tactics used to persuade others to support their cause. The KSM was the Kashmir freedom movement in a transnational microcosm. From them I would learn from asking the question:

Do they engage because of the identitarian appeal of a free Kashmir or do they engage for different reasons?

Kashmiris are certainly driven by a goal to raise awareness for their cause to an international audience. Being Kashmiri is a driving force behind participating in events as well as setting up branches of KSM societies. However, most respondents are actively involved in other campaigns other than Kashmir, which leads me to believe that they are interested in some of the bigger liberal causes than on Kashmir alone. Many are active in the Palestine movement, for example, or have volunteered in their communities, or helped raise humanitarian aid.

How are Kashmir freedom activists framing their movement in an effort to increase support from an international audience?

Framing tactics are important for understanding the methods and tools used to promote the azadi movement to an international audience as well as a transnational and transient Kashmir community. These would be analysed closely through attending events and analysing social media posts and flyers. Successes and setbacks could be measured through attending KSM meetings where you hear from a core group of members where they set goals and give indications on what they will do to achieve those goals and reflect upon what works and what doesn't.

As an international audience may not have a direct stake in the outcome of any final solution for the territory of an independent Kashmir, I had hypothesized that there may be some reframing of messages in an effort to relay the Kashmir struggle in terms that activists working on other campaigns could understand or relate to. This is an interesting point to consider because the way that campaigns are framing and reframing their messages is a valuable point of knowledge not just for understanding the Kashmir movement but for understanding transnational movements more generally. My conclusion for this point is that it is most probable that campaigns reframe their messaging in an effort to reach a larger audience, but that this mainly happens to those campaigns which are ideologically aligned. This could be seen in a microcosm from KSM events and joint events with other groups. Widely represented were groups that are generally affiliated with the left of the political spectrum: Anti-war groups, groups against racism, promotion of diversity, women's rights, workers' rights, socialists, other self-determination groups, and groups that fought or raise awareness for human rights such as Amnesty International. This spoke to a generalizing of how liberal campaigners work together, but it also points to an important feature of the contemporary azadi movement: it is undoubtedly a left-leaning, liberal movement. Does the fact that KSM campaigns alongside left-leaning movements have an impact on the extent to which KSM is liberal ideologically? Or, perhaps, it was always a liberal movement which sought out a wider, liberal audience. This thesis does not and cannot specifically address this last question, but it can and does speculate about the significance that this finding has on how the Kashmir freedom movement is perceived. It cannot be perceived as an ethnically or linguistically exclusive movement as it extends to those who may not be native speakers of Kashmiri, or Koshur. It cannot be seen as simply a militant movement inspired by Islamic fundamentalists as it cannot be perceived as religiously exclusive because it does include other religious backgrounds as its conception of who is Kashmiri – Sikh, Kashmiri

Pandits, and any other historically underrepresented minority in the Kashmir region. The new Kashmiri freedom movement is one that emerges as progressive and generally liberal-oriented in its perception of the rights of minorities and women and in the roles allocated to women in its organization and leadership. Although the contemporary movement certainly has its roots in previous social organizations in the Valley against oppression, the contemporary movement emerges as one that is against the postcolonial violence of occupation as well as everyday violence of patriarchy. The connections between self-determination of Kashmir and the reclaiming of agency for Kashmiri women is also a consequence of the rejection of occupation. These themes are further outlined in the thesis structure at the end of this introductory chapter. The first chapter outlines the genesis and transnationalization of Kashmir's freedom struggle. Although this is not a history-based thesis, a background of the Kashmir conflict is necessary here in order to contextualise the contemporary movement, which is the main focus of this research.

The activists and political entrepreneurs of Kashmir's azadi movement have framed their cause as one that is for the promotion of justice, for the ending of human rights abuses, and for the reclaiming of autonomy for Kashmir and for the women of Kashmir from violence – some directed by the state apparatus and others by a patriarchal authority. The key ways in which Kashmir freedom activists have framed these messages in such a manner in the contemporary freedom movement sets it apart from the previous movements for autonomy under an Indian state or a violent resistance is more deeply analysed in the third chapter of this thesis, following the methods chapter. For now, this introduction will turn to more generalised theory used in this research on social movements and on social movements framing.

Social Movements

Social movements is a key theoretical framework for this research on the contemporary Kashmir freedom movement. To frame this research in terms of social movements research, I turn to some key definitions and explanations of what social movements are before explaining in more detail the use of a social movement frame to solicit support for a cause. Social movement scholars Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow (2007) have defined a social movement as 'a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and

solidarities that sustain these activities' (8). Contentious politics, on the other hand is described by Tilly and Tarrow (ibid.) as involving claims making on another actor, usually a governmental entity. All contentious politics involves coordinated efforts of collective action, but social movements, they argue, are *sustained* efforts as well as an 'array of public performances' and 'repeated public displays of worthiness' (ibid.: 8). In this manner, contentious politics can be any singular act of resistance, whereas a social movement signifies more of a series of sustained acts of resistance. In a previous work of Tilly's, he further provides what may be a more lay definition of a social movement as articulated by an editorialist in the Zimbabwe *Harare Daily* which asserts that social movements are

'inclusive organizations comprised of various interest groups...[comprising] the significant strata of society such as workers, women's groups, students, youths and the intellectual component...These various interest sectors of society will be bound together by one common grievance which in most cases will be the commonly perceived lack of democracy in a specific setting...' (Tilly, 2004: 1).

This is an interesting complementary definition as it reiterates the notion of sustained mobilisation, but emphasises that a social movement will comprise a 'significant strata of society.' This is an important point of reference to note when challenging identitarian motivations for resistance in the case of Kashmir, but also in the case of other self-determination movements which have become transnationalized including the movement for a free Palestine or Tibet.

A social movement is a sustained series of mobilisations which comprise a cross-spectrum of society and, according to Meyer and Tarrow (1998), can be defined as 'collective challenges to existing arrangements of power and distribution by people with common purposes and solidarity, in sustained interactions with elites, opponents, and authorities' (4). To unpack this further, a social movement then is also a challenge to authority or to the status quo. Diani (1996) also notes that social movements have been understood as an attempt to challenge the system. Diani asserts that social movements represent a 'peculiar type of collective action, characterized by identity, solidarity, and the attempt to break the limits of compatibility of a given system' (1996:6). All of these definitions together, have similar elements. Notably, they all reference some kind of power struggle against an existing authority, regime, or status quo. Implicit in these definitions is a diverse sample of society, probably from a perceived subaltern segment

of who feels they are being subjugated in some way who act collectively in 'solidarity' to oppose a ruling faction. From an interpretive perspective, the KSM, which expresses itself as a 'solidarity movement,' would very much be considered to be a social movement by most definitions.

Contemporary developments in international activism have spurred the new social movements body of literature which highlight transnational collective action as assessed by Della Porta and Tarrow (2005), Tarrow (2005), and Oleson (2011), to name a few. Della Porta and Tarrow define 'transnational collective action' as 'coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions' (2005: 2). Della Porta and Tarrow, in their analysis, link social movement studies to the contemporary form of global politics observed today by purporting that in order for a social movement to become a *transnational* social movement, other factors beyond political opportunities and mobilizing structures are at play. These would be the more strategic processes which permit, for example, the diffusion of social movement strategies from one campaign to another or the emergence of an overarching aim that connects movement actors across a spectrum of campaigns. The strategies for extending a movement beyond its immediate benefactors is utilized through social movements framings. The framing process is a necessary part of how a social movement transforms itself from a domestic movement into a transnational one. The adoption of a larger set of frames and a larger support network was key for Cunningham's (2000) study of the Sanctuary movement in the United States in transforming itself from a movement that could be perceived as applying only to one organization's role in countering one country's immigration laws to larger questions of human rights and the justification of defying a government's laws on a moral basis. Cunningham observed that the religio-politico Sanctuary movement aimed at helping refugees in the U.S. gradually became more secularized while developing a transnational identity. The organization expanded its 'constituency of activists [and] utilized a globalization rhetoric...' (2000: 584). Social movements are reflexive and evolving entities. Working with KSM, I noticed a particularly marked distinction. When I began work with the group in 2012, the discourse of wanting a 'plebiscite' as promised by India changed in 2013 to 'referendum,' as the Scottish referendum for its withdrawal from the UK was omnipresent in the media. This, in turn, granted the movement support from other organizations and groups even if they were only tenuously linked. The KSM, it would

appear, have participated in this process of alignment to other causes they perceive as having at least some tenuous link to their own cause. Likewise, other societies and campaigns, although ascribe to their own specific aspirations, have not shied away from aligning itself, at least tenuously to some aspects of KSM and to the larger azadi movement in general.

Transnational politics can evolve and be reflective upon events, political conditions, and the will of supporters. Some of these events can spur a process of diffusion, internationalization, and externalization which are enhanced by international campaigns (Benford, 1997: 4-7). In his research, Benford looks at diffusion processes from one movement to another in an effort to understand the conditions necessary for collective action frames to 'transcend cultural and geographical barriers' (1997: 416). In general, whether by a process of diffusion of mobilization campaigns in one part of the world to another through sympathetic ventures or the awareness raised by successful internationalization campaigns, we can see transnational movements in much of the Western and non-Western worlds – bringing the global north and south together. Orjuela frames this assertion in the following way:

'Political opportunity structures in the host country shape [diaspora] activism and determines its efficiency, and in some cases may reframe diaspora, homeland or immigrant politics as struggles for separatist goals or as human rights causes...' (2012: 95).

Although some diaspora groups may mobilise specifically in regard to a Kashmiri issue as was the case in the Kashmir Identity Campaign, diaspora groups can mobilise in conjunction with other groups with similar interests as Kashmir Workers' Association did when the group affiliated with Labour in order to achieve demands for workers' rights. There is no reason to suspect that identity politics plays a role in diaspora mobilisation, however there is no reason to assume that diaspora politics cannot align itself with organizations such as Amnesty International in order to protest against human rights abuses in Kashmir. Likewise, Kashmiris in the diaspora may work in conjunction with others seeking liberation: Tibetans, Palestinians, etc. This leads into closer examination of the roles of framing processes in transnational social movements.

Frames and Framing Processes in Transnational Activism

Given the 'new' azadi movement's relatively nonviolent approaches that reflect upon modern transnational social movements, there is clearly some convergence and some contrast with prior theoretical perspectives that have been taken for granted. In order to better understand the salience of identity narratives in the contemporary transnational movement, I aim to extend factors of shifting framing processes of transnational social movements to previous perspectives of identity-based motivations for supporting the azadi movement. The findings of this study are unique, as it bridges the gap between previous scholarly contributions on Kashmir as well as extending social movement framing processes to the transnational movement. Re-conceptualizing the Kashmir movement as a transnational social movement is indeed another contribution as although the non-violent aspects of the Kashmir freedom movement has often been addressed in scholarly literature, it is a small focus. Much more ink has been devoted to reiterating violent resistance in Kashmir instigated by Pakistan¹. Blaming Pakistan for the insurgency thus runs the course of Pakistan versus India rather than highlighting the infractions of India and Pakistan on Kashmir. Research on violent and non-violent resistance within Kashmir or transnational links have been tied to the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) or specific pockets of diaspora in the United Kingdom, especially Birmingham (Ellis and Khan, 2001; Bolognani and Lyon, 2011; Sokefeld, 2016). Youth mobilization within and out-with Kashmir, although omnipresent in news reports, remains underrepresented in scholarly works. Working with the KSM offers a nuanced, albeit relatively representative way to engage with Kashmiri freedom activists who operate transnationally. It is not unique necessarily for youth movements to operate on a transnational level which activates not only diaspora representation but reaches across campaigns and causes to recruit participants. This is, perhaps most notably seen in the growing Palestine solidarity movements. It does, however, remain understudied. Long-term studies on transnational Kashmir youth solidarity movements are non-existent. This research, therefore, could progress the study not only of the transnational azadi

¹ A prevalent observation that Indian administrations are reluctant to negotiate with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute is that Pakistan does not do enough to prevent terrorism. This is a controversial issue as it is often highlighted that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) created the foreign hand in Kashmir's insurgency, without which, the full extent of violence would not have been seen (Schofield, 2010: 176).

movement, but help to understand how other non-Western movements are adapting their repertoires and frames in an effort to raise awareness for their cause and bring in more participants.

Key to analysing the contemporary Kashmir freedom movement is an understanding of the framing techniques and tactic used in order to reach a wider audience of interested activists, many of which I have referred to as 'outsider' activists. These outsiders are not directly involved in the Kashmir conflict. They do not live in Kashmir nor have families in Kashmir. Neither are they directly impacted by territorial concessions. These may be legal advocates, human rights activists, or other interested parties working on other campaigns, for example, that are perceived to be similarly aligned. In order to frame disparate campaigns or movements as being similarly aligned is what, in a nutshell, framing does. Kaufman et al. (2013) provide a rather succinct, if simplistic description of how frames are used:

'We create frames to name a situation in which we find ourselves, to identify and interpret specific aspects that seem key to us in understanding the situation, and to communicate that interpretation to others.'

A 'frame' is a term 'borrowed from Goffman...to denote "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals to "locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences within their life spaces and the world at large' (Snow et al., 1986: 464). The term can be constructed as one which denotes an individual cognitive perception; however, as Benford et al. (1986) and others have interpreted the concept, frames can also be used in a collective sense, to mobilize constituents to action. Indeed, whether consciously constructed or not, Benford et al. argues that 'frame alignment is a necessary condition for movement participation' (1986: 464). Two campaigns may be working towards completely different ends but may be articulated or framed as having similarly aligned goals. Likewise, two TSMOs may have different goals but both see their aims as being self-determination. This is evident in campaigns, for example, for a free Palestine or a free Tibet or a free Kashmir. Through aligning one cause in close proximity to another causes, it bridges the two causes, allowing for the potential of not only more supporters and larger protest rallies but can also be perceived as having more clout than a cause standing alone.

Of further importance for this study on the transnational azadi movement is the way in which frames play a strategic role in the escalation, de-escalation and overall intractability of a conflict. This can be a conscious effort by political entrepreneurs, or it

may be a consequence of years or media framing, state and non-state rhetoric and propaganda, or even played out in popular culture references such as in the popular Bollywood movie *Mission Kashmir* (2000). Kabir (2009) offers vivid analysis of representational framing of Kashmir in her book *Territory of Desire* (2009). The work is very poetic – offering juxtapositions of the fabled beauty of Kashmir with pictorial representations of the suffering of the Kashmiri. Kashmir, according to Kabir, is India's 'territory of desire' (2009: 33), framed as a sort of romantic fantasyland as well as a site for populist national discourse to emerge. The author uses *Mission Kashmir* (2000) to 'extract from Bollywood's Kashmir obsession, the relationship between Indian popular cinema and the mobilisation of national desire' (Kabir, 2009: 32). The film follows Altaaf, a young boy who loses his family in a crackdown and grows to want vengeance on the man responsible for the slaughter, Inayat Khan. He goes off for training in the militant camps after he discovers that his adopted father is the target of his rage and become a supporter of Kashmir freedom. When he returns, he becomes romantic with an old friend and here the film juxtaposes the main love interests' contrasting responses to the Valley of Kashmir's beauty with the violence that the region has faced. Sufi, his love interest, sees the beauty of Kashmir, whereas Altaaf relives his tragic past (Kabir, 2009: 37). This is poetic imagery that is often replicated in works about Kashmir – between beauty and despair. What the film does for nationalist tensions, according to Kabir, is to explicate Altaaf's 'desire for azadi as his anger with Inayat Khan...' however 'once that anger is defused...the film portrays the prevailing happiness of Indians and Kashmiri living harmoniously.' (ibid). *Mission Kashmir's* mission seems to be to relay that hatred for India will not bring happiness. The movie brings the audience to a sensible conclusion of letting go of old sorrows and coming to live harmoniously with Indians despite their differences to Kashmiris, and despite old grievances.

Whereas throughout the 1960s, the 'decolonized nation [was] refashion[ed] into the postcolonial playground of cinema' (Kabir, 2009: 56), Kashmir photography offered imagery of occupation and resistance. These are photographs of round-ups and checkpoints, of corpses, buildings reduced to rubble, injured men, mourning women, and unformed men cocking their guns or overlooking the dead, uncaring (Kabir, 2009: 57). These photographs, unlike the happy cinematic endings bear witness to tragedy and acts as memorialization which are stuck in an unhappy time. Kashmir is at once a land of fabled beauty and a destination of tragedy.

The focus of the study is from the perspective of the Kashmir freedom activist and how they perceive their movement, how they interpret their world; indeed, how they frame their grievances, the other actors, their goals, and their identities. For Kashmiris, Kashmir is home and has happy memories as well as tragic ones. The idea behind this project is to understand the framing and reframing of the Kashmir azadi movement. It is useful, however, to understand how Kashmir itself has been framed in the past as somewhere between tragedy and beauty.

Frames and framing tactics are powerful tools that can force us to zoom in on a specific aspect of identity. For Kaufman et al., writing from the perspective of frames used in conflict management, one of the key framing techniques is framing along identity lines. Identity frames, as the authors describe, is the way that

‘[d]isputants view themselves as having particular *identities* in the context of specific conflict situations. These identities spring from the individuals’ self-conception and group affiliations...The more central the challenge to one’s sense of self, the more oppositional one is likely to act. Typical responses to threats to identity include ignoring information and perspectives that threaten the core identity, reinforcing affiliations with like-minded individuals and groups, and negatively characterizing outsiders’ (2013).

A cursory glance at the language used regarding the Kashmir conflict sees the usage of identity frames from all actors involved in the conflict, whether it be the media, the respective governments involved, or the activists and supporters in their presentations and as found in blog commentary. This is almost an expected consequence of a conflict - that it is presented by all sides in a value-laden way. However, as Kaufman et al. (2013) purport in their essay on conflict framing, or Sreedharan (2009) argues in his thesis on news framing, the *reframing* of how a conflict is portrayed can lead to a more conciliatory tone which is more conducive for conflict de-escalation and resolution.

Whereas some social movement analysis strategies may present an either-or justification for mobilization, (i.e. someone is motivated by rational choices or the presence of a mobilizing structure or identity politics,) framing can be ‘useful for rationalizing self-interest, convincing a broader audience, building coalitions, or lending preferentiality to specific outcomes’ (Kaufman et al. (2013). Framing, in a sense, is a means by which we have ready-made interpretations of a given situation. This interpretation as we perceive it can then be disseminated to others. Knowing what types

of frames are in use and how they are constructed allows one to draw conclusions about how they affect the development of a conflict and can be used to influence it. Thus, analysing the frames actors use in a given conflict provides fresh insight and better understanding of the conflict dynamics and can be useful in tracking a conflict's development (Kaufman et al., 2013). As with many theories, social movement theories have evolved from viewing popular movements as 'long-lasting panics or crowds' (Oliver and Johnston, 2000) to a move for a greater understanding of political entrepreneurs and opportunity structures (including resources available), to trying to theorize why people mobilize from a rational-choice or collective bargaining perspective. Framing theory, on the other hand integrates ideological connections into what may be perceived as a more comprehensive strategy for understanding the linkages between 'ideas and social construction of ideas with organizational and political process factors' (Oliver and Johnston, 2000: 1).

Transnational social movement studies have continued to research the political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes of movements, but have begun to take a closer look at the transformation of these factors in trying to understand the growth in international activism. 'Qualitative frame analysis lends itself to certain theoretical questions, such as strategic framing by SMOs, consciousness raising (which is a reframing activity), building collective identity...and fostering collective solidarity through strong mobilizing frames' (Johnston, 2002: 75). McDonald traces the shifts in structures and cognitive frames with reference to the G8 protests which garnered a massive following seven years after the G7 protests in London in 1991. Although the actors had different motivations for participating, he recognized certain recurring themes: '...the shift from hierarchy to network; the personalization of the commitment; the move from long term to short term; the shift from organization to project; the critical importance for the media...for the mediation of action; the shift from the organization to the event' (McDonald, 2006: 70). McDonald reviews the growing importance of identity in the study of social movements by the mid-1980s: 'Identity increasingly became understood as a resource that could be mobilized (Tilly, 1993: 4), or a factor that reduced the costs of mobilization (Tarrow, 1998), it was the way movements "transform their members into political actors" (Taylor and Whittier 1992: 104)' (McDonald, 2006: 26). He attributes this shift to the changing political environment in America. Growing research on identity politics led to an increasing discussion of the role of collective identities being used as a

political resource (ibid.). Politicizing identities implies that identities are socially constructed, and therefore able to be changed. West highlights the role of identity in strategic framing processes of social movements by highlighting:

‘The socially constructed nature of identity also has consequences for the strategy and tactics of identity politics. In the first place, identities are strategic and transient rather than permanent and essential, because as the very notion of identity politics implies, the political status of particular identities is not fixed for all time’ (2013: 97).

Johnston (2002) describes several properties of how frames influence social movements: ‘...frames orient our expectations based on past experience...a frame is a cognitive structure, or schema...’ and ‘...like other ideational factors that shape human behaviour, frames are *both* individual and social’ (63-4). Whereas frames may be treated ‘...as fixed structures captured in a moment in time...’ framing ‘...describes important activities in movement development, especially as contemporary movements concentrate on marketing themselves via frame alignment processes’ (ibid: 66). Framing alignment, in general, is the orientation of movement frames in particular contexts. ‘Movement entrepreneurs...fashion them at the intersection between a target population’s culture and their own frames and goals’ (Tarrow, 1998: 110). Tarrow describes framing alignment as a process whereby the cultural symbols representing a movement go from incremental changes to ‘bridging’ cultural symbols to particular issues, to expanding ‘...the boundaries of a movement’s primary framework to encompass broader interests or points of view...’ (ibid). Just as Cunningham describes the transnationalism of a movement as a transformative shift in activists’ cognition (2000), Tarrow notes that the cumulative process of frame alignment is ‘frame transformation’ (1998: 110). Transformation is the framing processes that can serve to both garner support for a movement, as well as to alienate more hard-line factions of a movement. Movement leaders, therefore, selectively choose which cultural symbols and frames they use to enable participants to act, often by giving ‘...an emotional valence aimed at converting passivity into action’ (Tarrow, 1998: 112). Olesen (2011) further connects this framing process with opportunity structures. Olesen asserts that ‘...*transnational framing* always unfolds within a transnational discursive opportunity structure’ (2011: 2). In essence, the framing processes of international activists corresponds to shifts in transnational discourse. Using recognized transnational discourses can effectively lend legitimacy to actors’ moral claims. Activists communicating in this vein create ‘...*global*

public awareness...which constitutes the particular parameters of advocacy movements' 'power' (ibid.: 3).

This study pays particular attention to Kashmir organizations in the United Kingdom, however it is highly likely that up and coming affiliate organizations take a cue from previous attempts at raising international awareness on the Kashmir issue in an effort to raise global public awareness. The World Kashmir Awareness Forum, a non-profit organization based in Ohio in the United States, claims have been 'established to educate the international community, particularly in the West on the real nature of the Kashmir issue' and also claims that its 'organization intends to reach wider audience around the world through the electronic media to publicize the Kashmir cause' (kashmirawareness.org). During KSM meetings, the council has expressed that its primary purpose is also 'to raise awareness.' Echoing this is the University of Birmingham's Kashmir Awareness Society, formed shortly after KSM Edinburgh. Even where committee members or organizers from one site of activism – virtual or physical – may not interact broadly with another site, there still exists obvious linkages. These linkages which come in the form of utilising common discursive techniques and strategies are what creates a sense of the Kashmir freedom movement as a global campaign based on similar grievances. How these grievances are shaped and disseminated to a global audience can be conceived as collective action frames, explained in the next section.

The Human Rights 'Metapackage'

In order for a movement to transcend the domestic realm to become transnationally relevant, it is necessary to re-package group goals in a manner more relatable to a wider audience (della Porta and Tarrow, 2005). Further, in order for the frames to resonate with the greatest number of constituents possible, it is important to appeal to personal experiences as well and individual and group identities. Della Porta et. al. stress the importance of constructing a symbolic collective subject, e.g. 'the working class, the people, the nation, environmentalists, women...' and integrating them into a somewhat structured mobilization unit (2006: 61). The idea is convincing the new collective to act as a unit based on the assumption that the broader 'movement's claims are "fair" and that the status quo is "unjust" (ibid.). Symbols must extend beyond the scope of a singular

community in order to reach out to an international or transnational audience. The use of symbols and metaphor are used in what Gamson and Lasch (1983) describe as interpretive packages which have a 'core consisting of an overall frame and position that define it...' and also 'suggests a central organising idea for understanding events relating to the issue...' (399). This certainly seems to be a succinct way to conceptualize the human rights frame as advocated by so many transnational groups. Oleson's work describes how activists may develop a 'solidaristic metapackage,' based on the presence of particular frames rooted in human rights-related activism (2009: 9). These interpretative packages have a more universalistic character which translates to a wider group being able to empathize or create bonds with the target group. Recent work in other contemporary movements has noted the transformation of separatist or freedom movements into transnational social movements. One such case also looks to Twitter to understand support for the Palestine Solidarity Movement in Ireland and the UK (Abu-Ayyash, 2014). Using Twitter feeds, a frames analysis approach is used to identify master frames in the Palestinian movement for self-determination. The movement, which has become much better known and publicised in recent years, demonstrates the heterogeneity and appeal the case for a free Palestine has for non-Palestinians, non-Arabs, and non-Muslims. A thorough analysis of key activist Twitter accounts reveals that the most frequent way to discuss the Palestinian movement is to discuss it in a human rights frame. Abu-Ayyash demonstrates this through analysis of the types of articles shared and the comments made on the article. The human rights frame, he purports, is what has the potential ability to mobilize people to action – or at least to publicly demonstrate support for the Palestinian cause. This analysis, I would argue, is incomplete, however. It is a great starting point in understanding motivations for 'slacktivism'² but lacks depth in understanding sympathizers' mobilization efforts.

Collective action frames, according to Benford and Snow (2000), are constructed and re-negotiated with regards to who or what is to blame. In the Palestinian conflict, as the previous example illustrates, the diagnosis is that the Palestinian people are suffering with blame usually attributed to Israeli security forces, and the prognosis leading to an

² 'Slacktivism' is often used when referring to acts on the Internet such as sharing an article or signing an online petition. The extent to which this represents true advocacy or elicits tangible outcomes is indeed hotly debated. For more on this debate, see Morozov, (2009); Howard et al (2017).

end to suffering is a free and independent Palestine. The motivation for action, it would appear is having empathy for the people suffering human rights abuses and possessing the will to fix it. As is often the case, however, and is argued in social movement literature, simply being opposed to human rights abuses is not enough to promote action. What is curious is the growth in support and interest in the Palestinian and Tibet movements, but the lack of human rights framing techniques to work observably in Kashmir – at least not to the same extent. This may be because India is such a big power militarily, economically, and culturally. Perhaps further research can help to identify what is different about these movements in order to allow better mobilizing by outsider activists on behalf of the outlying cause.

Although representing a very small engagement with much broader literature, Polletta and Jasper (2001) and countless other social movement scholars appreciate that the call to collective action is a constant push and pull between collective and individual identities – which are malleable and salient. This makes it very difficult to make any generalizable assumptions or typologies of SMOs, however, the breadth of work on the subject does offer hope in uncovering particular trends, such as understanding better the frames used by social movement organizers. Noakes and Johnston (2005) echo previous works by McAdam, et al. (1996) and others who purport that the reasoning for activists mobilizing always contains some subjective component. In my work with KSM, I have found that although in-group activists share some common ethnic or regionally ethnic identity (Kashmiri or other South Asian), out-group activists tend to share a subjective bond based on their own experience of perceived subjugation or oppression. For others still, it is their dedication to working with or perhaps a general or academic interest in disadvantaged minorities or victims of torture or human rights abuse. This is, of course, not always a neat line. There is room for overlap between in-group/out-group. As a researcher unaffiliated with Kashmir through kin, I would be initially considered to be an outsider; however, the bonds that I have made during my time working with the group and the connections I have made to Kashmiris does not make mean I have no stake in the conflict. Any attachment to Kashmir would give an outsider *some* affiliation even if the immediate outcome of territorial resolution would not directly impact one's life. Having to draw the line somewhere, however, I have deemed outsider activists as those who like

myself may have an affiliation but no direct connections (through family, marriage, or property) in Kashmir.

The use of framing is an important means for exploring answers to the research questions posed at the outset of this chapter. The initial question which asks if the new azadi movement is identitarian-based. This is more of a rhetorical question as I have immediately outlined from initial observations with KSM that, assuming the KSM is representative of the transnational azadi movement that it is most certainly based on more than simple identitarian claims. The second part of the question asks if it is not based on identity motives, then what is it based on? It is clear that one's identity and belief influence one's decision to sympathise or mobilise for a cause, but by fixating on a homogenous representation of ethnicity, national identity, or religion does not explain the complex, often intertwining of salient identities. These identities become not so much based on 'objective' signifiers such as one's ethnic identity but may be based on more abstract signifiers. Expressing the contemporary movement as one that is based predominately on ethnonational identities is clearly not how Kashmiri activist perceive to be the purpose or intent of organizations such as KSM. The second question assumes that a more abstract set of identities may be more relational to contemporary transnational movement thinking. This question asks how Kashmiri activists are framing their movement to bring in an international audience. This is a more useful line of enquiry as it moves to understanding the more abstract processes of social movement mobilization. By analysing the framing of narratives as expressed by participants and found in leaflets and on virtual sites, we can gain a richer understanding of the processes and strategies through which movements such as Kashmir's azadi movement attract a broader constituency of supporters. How activists diagnose problems in IAK and offer prognostic solutions further aids in understanding the processes of collective action frames in contemporary movements seeking a broader audience.

Identitarian motivations to participate in the azadi movement can also be assessed through the use of frames analysis, but with the full awareness that no human being is two dimensional. One may be motivated to support a free Kashmir through them being a Kashmiri, a Muslim, a campaigner for human rights, or because they empathize with Kashmiris as a perceived minority in their own state. Analysing interviews and observations of meetings can help to identify how much influence these factors have on

the movement, or as I discovered during the course of investigation, how these factors influence the re-framing of the movement. In a cyclical matter, identities are explored as a means to understand how actors frame the movement and further how they frame the movement is explored in order to assess how their own cultural identities are being reinterpreted and redefined. It is a complex interaction, but strategies such as meta-packaging provides a way to answer, at least speculatively, how much influence other movements have on the Kashmir movement and how framing of the azadi movement may fluctuate in response to affiliate campaigns which may interact or at least impact Kashmir activists' strategies and narratives. Frames help us to understand and to articulate our world. They are malleable and constantly re-defined, but this does not mean they are not useful in capturing the essence of a movement during a phase. A picture captures a static set of images within a frame. We can speculate from looking at that picture what may be going on adjacent to the image. Similarly, this is the strategy of frames analysis.

It is with this that I have opted to infer based on my work with two KSM groups how the transnational azadi movement is able to bring on outside supporters and sustain their movement. Human rights is the common denominator for collective action. However, it is expressed in more nuanced ways. These are explored further in this thesis. The human rights frame, as I explain in chapter two, is akin to a tree. Sub-frames are branches from that tree which account for various facets of human rights that are being called for. Those sub-frames I have identified through the course of this research are: victimization, minority, injustice, women's human rights, and resistance frames. Although there is overlap between these, these have been the most commonly used ways to frame the contemporary freedom movement to an outside audience as well as a common way to engage with one's own experiences as a Kashmiri.

Thesis Structure

Chapter One

The Genesis and Transnationalization of Kashmir's Freedom Struggle

This chapter provides an overview of the Kashmir freedom movement from pre-Partition mobilisation against the Dogra regime to the establishment of pro-freedom political

parties in the post-Partition era. It continues with a look into how the freedom struggle turned to a violent insurgency in response to lack of political space given as well as in response to human rights abuses afflicted on Kashmiris. From there, the struggle is traced to the contemporary era where the militancy no longer received support from Pakistan and is thus reliant upon nonviolent strategies of resistance. Connections are made between the contemporary movement and previous strategies of resistance. From this historical overview, the review of literature turns to competing narratives about Kashmir's freedom movement. These stem from looking at the conflict in Kashmir as a bilateral conflict between India and Pakistan and how the rationale for ethnic and nationalist-motivated conflicts arise in post-Partition literature, especially during the period of insurgency and immediately after in an effort to explain the insurgency. Woven into these narratives are more contemporary framings of the conflict which view the ethnonationalist element of mobilisation as much more nuanced. This review looks at how the Kashmir identity has evolved and can be perceived as not only an ethnonational identity but as an evolving political and cultural identity. Looking at the Kashmir freedom struggle through the lens of a sophisticated social movement helps to relate to a broader international audience of sympathisers in the azadi movement today.

Chapter Two

Research Methods: An Interpretive, Qualitative Approach

The methods chapter will elaborate on the field sites and sampling strategies. It will also discuss the research questions and different forms of qualitative data used and the strategies for analysis and interpretation of the data to answer those questions. A reflection is made on how personal experiences of interviewing allowed for the evolution of the research questions and aims. I also discuss some of the difficulties I had during field research and access and where my approaches went rather well. This chapter reflects upon the introduction's social movement frames with a discussion of master frames, with an overarching human rights master frame uniting the diverse actors in the new Kashmir freedom movement.

Chapter Three

New Kashmir Azadi Movement

This chapter follows the Kashmir movement post 2008 and highlights efforts within and outwith Kashmir to mobilize on behalf of freedom. Rooted in historical precedent of collective mobilization, the new generation of Kashmiris have been gifted with the tactics and strategies of their predecessors but have expanded and evolved these. Women, although always active in Kashmiri mobilisation have taken more leadership roles in the new movement, formed organizations within and out-with Kashmir, and have helped to expand the cause of azadi to an international audience via transnational organizations as well as via documentaries, writings, and speaking engagements with international audiences. The new generation of Kashmiris have been leading a shift in cultural consciousness which has involved popular arts such as protest songs, photo exhibitions, poetry, and graffiti art. Some of this is done in conjunction with other campaigns or movements in a show of solidarity.

Chapter Four

Internationalization of the Struggles for a Free Kashmir

This chapter, as it suggests, follows the development of the Kashmir freedom movement from a domestic issue to one of international importance with a transnational solidarity network. The internationalization of the Kashmir freedom cause began with Kashmiris but were quickly taken on by other people in South Asia and other people out-with South Asia. The chapter examines diaspora movements of Kashmiris from both the Indian and Pakistan Administered sides and notes the rise of mobilization outside of Kashmir. Attention here is paid to the sort of mobilization campaigns I witnessed during my field work with a focus on student and university-led or affiliated activism.

Chapter Five

Transnational Activism and Movements: Identity Transformation and Solidarity

The chapter looks more closely at how KSM members and affiliate activists respond and interact with affiliate campaigns such as the case for a free Palestine. It expands beyond this, however, to look at linked solidarity efforts on such campaigns as minority rights which has been an active part of the transnational movement. The interpretation of

oneself as a subaltern vis-à-vis a majority influence has the capacity to connect in-group and out-group activists by a unique bond or kinship that extends beyond mere sympathy for a cause or campaign.

Chapter Six

KSM Edinburgh: Origin, Participants, and Core Issues

This chapter acts as a sort of case study for the fieldsite KSM Edinburgh. In it, I discuss how the society came to form and how I came to be a participant observer with the group. I discuss who the participants are for core meetings and events and how they came to be involved in the society. I further examine the core issues and strategies of the group, such as broadening their support base through solidarity efforts with other campaigns and groups.

Chapter Seven

KSM SOAS: Origin, Participants, Core Issues

This chapter, like the previous chapter, showcases KSM SOAS, how the society has formed, and how I came to be a participant observer with the society. Although there is some comparison to KSM Edinburgh, I try to use this chapter as a case study of the London group. As in the previous chapter, I also discuss the participants drawn to the meetings and events, and explore their core strategies, some disagreements and solidarities.

Chapter Eight

Human Rights and Political Issues

This chapter explores the use of legal framing and the adoption of tactics and language from other campaigns as a means to more effectively spread awareness for the azadi movement and garner a broader spectrum of supporters through terms that they can understand and relate to. It presents human rights issues in IAK through the lens of a small sample of respondents in the valley, but it is also reflexive of the narratives that transient activists abroad rely on to tell their stories or to drawn upon as evidence of these abuses in their homeland. This is also reflective of the use of the victimization frame as a means for relating their cause to outside participants and sympathizers. This chapter

explores this and other everyday issues of living under occupation that lead to the desire for azadi and explores an emergent identity of resistance which aims to reclaim agency and overcome victimization.

Conclusion: What Transnational Solidarities can do for Kashmir as a Freedom and Justice Cause

The conclusion aims to sum up all of the evidence and points to the transformation of an apparently domestic freedom movement into a transnational activist movement which extends to a broader constituency than immediate stakeholders. This chapter will explore options for conflict resolution through engaging in dialogue with grassroots SMOs such as KSM. The conclusion will further elaborate on how this rather small movement may link to the wider freedom movement and what this means for the evaluation of other trans(national) movements who frame their movements in more universal terms?

CHAPTER 1

The Genesis and Transnationalization of Kashmir's Freedom Struggle

Having located this thesis in the theory of social movements in the Introduction, the first chapter begins with the contextualization of the Kashmir *azadi*, or freedom movement by offering a historical overview. By looking at the beginnings of the azadi movement, we can better understand the significance of the contemporary movement for freedom of all, or part of Kashmir. The azadi movement has moved through several phases and as such the analytical framings of the movement as one of secession, freedom, self-determination, an identitarian insurgency, a move for autonomy, and a human rights movement have all been cited in various contexts. As one of my respondents argued at a meeting at the Kashmir Solidarity Movement in Edinburgh (KSM Edinburgh), 'This is not a secession movement. Kashmir never belonged to India.' The circumstances for which Kashmir is framed as a secession movement is certainly not agreed upon by the activists in support of a free Kashmir. These nuances will be explored more as well when exploring the historical contexts of the azadi movement.

From the historical context, this chapter then moves to a section on competing narratives. This section looks at how throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s it became common to view the Kashmir freedom movement as a movement inspired by identitarian claims, e.g. nationalist, ethnic, linguistic, and religious claims. Despite the concurrence of violent and non-violent resistance against the Indian government and the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the movements were both viewed in terms of identitarian claims rather than as acting in resistance to an oppressive force guilty of human rights violations. This had given Kashmir's freedom movement a taint of terrorism that may have been perceived as fuelled by Islamic fundamentalism rather than a human rights movement against the murdering of and the violation of innocent bodies, now widely documented. The new azadi movement, however, is one that from a western perspective looks more like a social movement ought to look like. There is a blanket rejection of violence by most activists, despite the continued violations by security forces and although Kashmiris have always participated in open protests, now there is verifiable

proof of this happening in news as well as social media. The new Kashmiri movement has marked similarities as well as differences from the way its previously operated, but the most significant different is perhaps in how the movement is *perceived* rather than how it acts. There will be more analysis of this in the methods chapter and the following chapter on the new azadi movement.

For now, this chapter will turn to the historical background of the freedom movement. My aim is to understand the contemporary movement; the historical background helps to locate how the preceding generations mobilised for azadi and how this has inspired the new generations of activists. It also helps to locate the motivations for seeking azadi which may or may not be identitarian-based. The way the movement has been framed historically can help to understand the contemporary movement by understanding where it distances itself from the past and where it engages with a contemporary understanding of universal rights.

Historical Background of the Kashmir Freedom Movement

The Preface of this thesis outlines the origin of the azadi movement in Kashmir to roughly the 1930s. Although there has been development of a Kashmiri identity including Kashmiri traditions, taboos, language and a syncretic form of Islamic religion since before Mughal rule half a millennium ago, *Kashmiriyat* or Kashmiri-ness as a political identity was only emergent in the lead up to Partition, as argued by Rao (1999). This section explores the rise of mobilisation by Kashmiris pre-partition. It is then exposed that the Kashmiri identity is one made of solidarity between a plurality of actors and the movement for an autonomous or independent state of J&K was one that evolved from and collective of progressive, liberal movements such as for student, worker, and labourer rights. These progressive, liberal movements set the tone for Kashmiri freedom activists throughout Dogra and Indian rule. Context is provided through looking at key historical events in the lead up to Partition and post-Partition calls for autonomy and independence, but the theoretical framework of this thesis is also highlighted in the special attention made to the assortment of movements and the tendency towards liberalism that define the contemporary Kashmiri movement.

Pre-Partition Azadi Movement

Pre-Partition India was ruled by the British, however certain regions, or 'Princely States' were given autonomy in exchange for loyalty to the British crown, including the use of troops should the British require them. In 1846, nearly one hundred years before Partition, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was formed through an agreement struck between the British and Gulab Singh, who colluded with the British against the threat of Sikh power in the region (Bose, 2003: 15; Behera, 2006: 14). Singh, who already claimed Jammu and parts of Ladakh and Baltistan was also granted authority over the Kashmir Valley and regions of Gilgit not already under his control (ibid). The Treaty of Amritsar granted these territories in exchange for '750,000 pounds...in recognition of his services to the British crown.' (Akbar, 1985: 220; Behera, 2006: 14) and for an annual sum of 'one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats...and three pairs of Kashmir shawls' (Bose, 2003: 15). The bargain was struck that would lead to the plural princely State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) with a majority Muslim population, but significant Hindu, Buddhist and other minorities. In addition to religious pluralism, the state also hosted a plethora of linguistic and ethnic cleavages, but they did not all have equal rights or access to benefits.

Although many peasants under the Dogra regime had a rough time, the Kashmiri Muslims were the most affected by discriminatory policies which prevented them from having fair access to education and to jobs, especially those in the administrative services. The Dogra were often given the best opportunities with the Kashmiri Pandits also faring well under Dogra rule. Thus, during the 1920s and 1930s while Kashmiri Muslims were mobilising against the regime, the Pandits continued to support the ruling Maharaja at that time, Hari Singh. And even with a sustained movement against the regime, sectarian divides and ethnic cleavages meant it was difficult to have a united front against the Dogra. Two organizations emerged during these times in the decades leading up to the Partition of 1947: Reading Room Party in Srinagar and the Muslim Young Men's League in Jammu (Behera, 2003: 15) which would have a great impact on the direction of the Kashmir freedom movement.

The Reading Room was established by young Kashmiri intellectuals who had gone abroad or to good universities in other parts of India and then returned to Kashmir. Although several notable Kashmiri freedom or autonomy advocates emerged, the most famous name was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who joined the Reading Room in 1930

after returning to Kashmir from studying (Schofield, 2010: 18). Kashmir activism was already heightened by this time as there were several groups with their own nuanced political agenda. Comprised of laborers, peasants, traders, artisans, students and other underrepresented segments of society, they advocated for better access to education, jobs, better working conditions, and fair access to state administration careers which were dominated by Dogra and Pandits (Behera, 2006: 15).

By the time the British were preparing to leave, the grievances of the Muslims were long-standing. They faced exorbitant tax rates, could not own any of the land they tilled, and generally lived at 'mere survival' level (Malik 2005: 25). Although the grievances the Muslims had were against the Hindu Dogra ruler and not Hinduism, the seeds were sown for communal violence along religious lines in the lead-up to Partition. Up to this point, Hindu-Muslim clashes were largely unheard of in Kashmir, although they took place in other parts of British India. The Muslim bourgeoisie took advantage of these clashes and turned a class-based conflict into one with more religious overtones; where the Muslims were perceived as being oppressed and the Hindus were viewed as exploitative (Malik 2005: 38). By 1931, the tensions rose to a critical point. The Muslim Young Men's League in Jammu who were engaged in underground activities eventually 'exploded in a massive Muslim agitation ...which the Muslims call a religious war' (Behera, 2006: 16). In Kashmir, the spark was lit in July 1931 when Abdul Qadir 'made a fiery speech calling for the people to fight against oppression,' (Schofield, 2010: 18). After being arrested, a crowd amassed outside the jail in Srinagar in protest. Several arrests were made but it was the firing on the crowd, killing twenty-one people (ibid) that produced Kashmir's first martyrs. In contemporary times, 13 July would be celebrated as martyrs day in commemoration of those killed during the protests, but also for those who lost their lives fighting Indian security forces in later decades (Schofield, 2010; 202). Martyrs' Day would have a significant impact for the 'new' Kashmiri freedom movement as well. Further, it was the 1931 uprisings that for the first time saw how essential women were to the movement, as they 'came out of the confines of their households and were visible in overwhelming numbers in public' (Misri, 2002: 14).

What may be the most significant mark of the birth of the azadi movement was also marred with communal tensions in the Valley and beyond. After the firing, the twenty-one casualties were paraded through the centre of town, which stoked a backlash. In retaliation for the Dogra 'unleashing a rule of terror' (Schofield, 2010: 18) shops owned

by Hindus were looted. More arrests were made, including Sheikh Abdullah. Later that year, Hari Singh established the Glancy commission in order to explore reforms, but the result was a legislative assembly which only solidified the maharaja's autocratic rule throughout the 1930s and 1940s (Bose, 2003: 20). The first political party in J&K was formed as a means for pressing for social and political change in 1932, the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, or just know as the Muslim Conference (Bose, 2003: 20). The Muslim Conference was established primarily by political leaders detained as a result of the events in July, including Sheikh Abdullah and Ghulan Abbas (Scofield, 2010: 18). The party was supported by 'Muslim intelligentsia, clergy, tradespeople...industrial laborers, artisans, and peasants' alike and among their demands was a 'bigger share in the civil services for educated Muslim youth, land ownership, lower land revenue...better working conditions...and recruitment of Muslims into the army' (Behera, 2006: 16). Despite the presence of Muslim in the name, progressive Hindus and Sikhs were also part of the party, and throughout the 1930s, the party began to take on more secular, national, and socialist objectives (Behera, 2006: 16). The Kashmir Youth League, established in 1936 and the Kisan Sabha, or Farmer's Union are examples of secular organizations which promoted unions and other labour rights and working conditions for labourers, weavers, *tonga* drivers, and other underrepresented members of the working classes. Behera, in her analysis of these movements refers to them as 'progressive and liberal' (2006: 17) and asserts that this helped

'political leaders, especially the young and popular Sheikh Abdullah, see the conflict in a different light, no longer focusing on its religious roots but rather on the exploitative nature of the state's political and economic structures.'

The progressive, liberal, youth-driven movements would be a recurring feature of the azadi movement. It also set a precedence for the secularization of the movement. Rather than continue to be referred to as the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, it was agreed in 1939 by an overwhelming number of delegates that the name should be changed to simply All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, or the NC for short (Bose, 2003: 20). As most social movements, the move was not welcomed by everyone and the secularization served to alienate those who feared the NC would be cosying up to the Indian National Congress (INC), the party that was mobilising against British rule. This was in direct conflict with the All India Muslim League who passed the 'Pakistan Resolution' in 1940 (ibid: 21). An invitation by Abdullah to Kashmir in 1940 extended to

the INC's leader, Jawaharlal Nehru - who would become India's first Prime Minister – solidified these fears for NC's dissidents (ibid.). Abdullah and Nehru found companionship politically and personally over the years, embracing socialist objectives such as land reform policies and more rights for the peasants and working classes (Bose, 2003). Despite being co-religionists to Kashmiris, a more socialised form of politics was not well-received by land-owning elites in parts of the Punjab who had no interest in socialist land reform policies which were likely to cede to Pakistan (Akbar, 1985). Political leanings in other parts of pre-Partition India were important factors in Abdullah's decision to support a secular India beyond religious ideology. Not everyone was turned away due to the threat of socialist policies. The religious leader Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah withdrew support from Abdullah due to sectarian differences (Behera, 2006: 17). As sectarian divides and political cleavages became more apparent, the case for an independent Pakistan deepened. While the INC increased its mobilisation against the British rule in their Quit India campaign, the Muslim League was pursuing its campaign for Pakistan. In 1944, the leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, visited Kashmir. Instead of courting Abdullah's NC at this time, the Pakistan advocated instead chose to align himself with the Muslim Conference, further distancing its movement from the secular, socialist Abdullah (Bose, 2003: 22), while solidifying the bond between the INC and the NC.

While the state of Jammu and Kashmir became more important strategically for the Muslim League and the INC, the Dogra regime continued its crackdown on opposition. Zutshi (2004) purports that it is in this context that mobilisation around a Kashmiri Muslim identity had really taken root. In the lead up to partition, in the context of the 13 July shootings, the denial of equal rights, the arrests and clamping down on opposition of the Dogra regime served to create a solidarity among those actors in opposition to the autocratic rule of Singh.

Kashmiriyat, or Kashmiri-ness, is a frequently visited contentious concept of an overarching Kashmiri identity that seems to overcome linguistic, religious, ethnic and other barriers. However, as Rao points out, prior to Partition, the term did not emerge as a rallying point for political mobilization in the Valley (1999). It was only just before Partition that a Kashmiri identity as a political identity had emerged, and this should be taken in context of not only a Muslim call for a homeland with an independent Pakistan, but several other self-determination movements that were pressed in the lead-up to

partition – especially once it became clear that Jinnah’s call for an independent Pakistan stood a chance at success. In September 1944, a manifesto ‘Naya (New) Kashmir’ was adopted, outlining J&K’s future under a democratic state (Bose, 2003: 25). This document would be an important document laying the groundwork for more autonomy within J&K but also from either independent Pakistan or India. The document envisioned a

‘National Assembly and a cabinet government, and it calls for decentralized governance based on devolution of decision-making and administrative responsibilities to districts, *tehsils* (subdivisions of districts), towns and villages’ (Bose, 2003: 25).

Furthermore, a Naya Kashmir would use Urdu as a *lingua franca* for the State. The reasoning for this would be due to the plurality of language use in J&K. Kashmiri, or

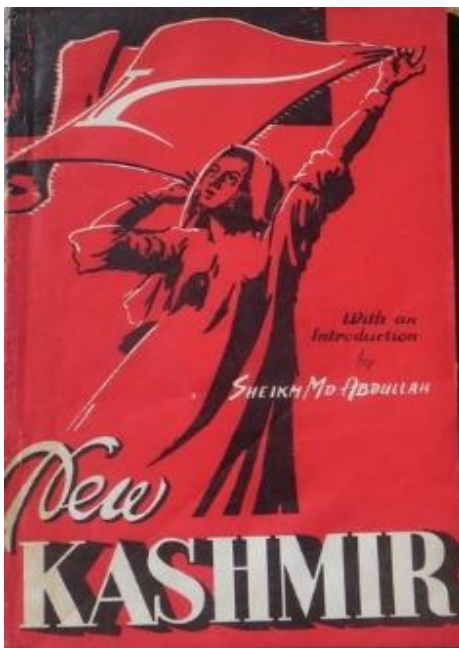


Figure 1:1 Propaganda depicting Kashmiri woman holding sickle and hammer flag in red, Andrew Whitehead, 2007

Koshur, had been and still is widely used on in the Kashmir Valley today but not widely used in other parts of the State. The Naya Kashmir manifesto was important not only for formalizing demands for how Kashmir ought to be government, but in that it adopted a socialist stance. It was, according to Bose, influenced by ‘a Jacobin conception of popular sovereignty, augmented by a...Bolshevism...inspired by the Soviet model...’ (2003: 26). When the mass agitation against the Dogra regime, the Quit Kashmir movement was launched in April 1946, Abdullah called for the tearing up of the Treaty of Amritsar (ibid.). Naya Kashmir was a radical call for land to the tiller, land redistribution, rights for women’ and rights to work in professions otherwise blocked for Muslim

peasantry (Whitehead, 2007). To highlight the connection between socialism and women’s liberation, Whitehead, at a Kashmir Solidarity Movement in London in early 2016, showed the cover of a pamphlet from the era which depicted a woman waving the flag of Sheikh Abdullah’s National Conference party. The pamphlet, argued Whitehead, featured the flag which was ‘deliberately designed to look like a hammer and a sickle...’ and included a translation of Stalin’s manifesto. Krishna Misri also highlights the change

from seeing Kashmiri women as having a limited role in a New Kashmir to taking a more empowered position for the first time (2002: 3-4). This sort of empowerment and ability to engage in public spaces for women was unique in all the Subcontinent, and also unfortunately short-lived (Misri, 2002: 4).

Aside from being inspired by previous movements for self-determination such as the Jacobins or Bolsheviks and a socialist framework, early Kashmir freedom activists were also influenced by other movements in the lead-up to Partition for self-determination. Wolpert (2010) for example cited early calls for a Greater Bangladesh which would have included Bengali-speaking parts of modern-day India including Kolkata. Likewise, Schofield (2010) points out disputes over the would-be allocations of important Sikh shrines across the new border as one reason for precipitating the Khalistan movement. The historical oppression of the Dogra, the influence of socialism and other self-determination movements, the success of the Pakistan movement and growing demand for independence from other regions of the Subcontinent were all reasons behind the early-riser azadi movement. The events that unfolded on the eve of Partition and the immediate aftermath would serve to further enforce the early demands for azadi as well as contemporary demands for freedom.

Partition

The Quit India movement, due not only to effective mobilisation tactics but also to the severe losses Great Britain sustained during the Second World War, was successful at making the case for Britain to withdraw from the Subcontinent. The case for Partition of India into a secular India and Islamic Pakistan upon the withdrawal of the British also came to be accepted. The last viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten, gave the edict to divide the portions under direct rule from Britain into Muslim-majority sections which would cede to Pakistan and Hindu-majority areas which would become part of the new India (Ganguly 2001: 15). The princely states would have the option of acceding to one or the other. It was the assumption that the autonomous states would base their decision on geographic location and demographic makeup. In fact, most of the states did accede in this manner, but there were a few exceptions. The exceptions were Hyderabad, Junagadh, and Jammu and Kashmir. For Hyderabad and Junagadh there was a Hindu majority but a

Muslim ruler. When the Muslim ruler of Junagadh opted for Pakistan, the Indian government resisted the position and demanded a plebiscite (Behera 2005: 62). Not surprisingly the Hindu-majority voted for India. The state of Jammu and Kashmir was reversed. Although there was a substantial minority of Hindus (and other religions), Muslims were – and still are - in the clear majority. Given these circumstances, and a general will to retain power for as long as possible, the maharaja of J&K decided to remain independent of either India or Pakistan for as long as possible. So it was that even after 15 August 1947 when India would be independent, the fate of J&K was still undecided.

In the Spring of 1947, people from the Poonch district, now a part of Azad Kashmir, mounted a no-tax campaign and the Maharaja responded by strengthening his garrisons with Hindus and Sikhs and confiscated all weapons in the Poonch district in July of that year (Schofield 2010: 41). Ex-soldiers who formerly comprised the majority of the British Indian forces in J&K from Poonch and Mirpur districts procured weapons from tribes in what was formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Provinces (NWFP). Believing that the Maharaja had passed an order to ‘massacre the Muslims’ the former soldiers organized an army of 50,000 and led a revolt against the Dogras (ibid). The Maharaja attributed the revolt to infiltration from the newly-formed Pakistan, and although rumours of genocide against Muslims led to the entrance of Pathan (or Pashtun) tribesmen from the NWFP, the revolt was essentially home-grown, and not a direct state-sanctioned action. Meanwhile, in Jammu, about 500,000 people –practically eliminating the Muslim population- died or fled to West Punjab in the wake of Partition. Those who fled the violence claimed that the atrocities had been perpetrated not just by ‘uncontrolled bands of hooligans’ but also by ‘organized units of the Maharaja’s army and police’ (Schofield 2010: 43).

A conservative estimate of a quarter of a million people died as a result of partition-related violence and a further estimation by the Indian Constituent Assembly of 33,000 Hindu or Sikh women abducted by Muslims and an estimation from Pakistan of 50,000 Muslim women abducted by Hindu or Sikh men (Kleinman et. al.,1997: xv).³ Given the scale of brutality involved, various precautions were made to ensure the safety of the civilian population. Andrew Whitehead’s blog documents the story of Krishna Misri

³ This may be a low estimate. Elsewhere, Veena Das cites as an early estimate of abducted women from both sides of the new borders as ‘close to one hundred thousand’ (1997: 67)

(now a professor) who in her youth had joined the Women's Self Defence Corps (WSDC) as a teenager in 1947. Misri recounts how her exposure to progressive female role-models was an empowering experience that would shape and influence her future endeavours. She explains that the WSDC, a wing of the Jammu and Kashmir National Militia, formed in response to the

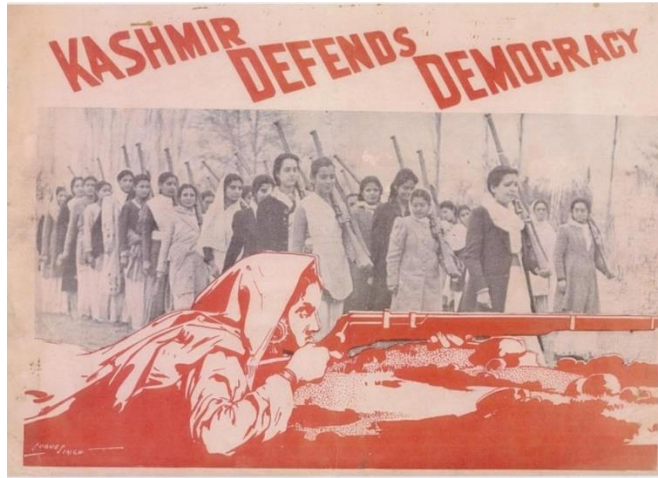


Figure 1:2: Kashmiri women demonstrate rifle use, Whitehead 2013

brutality of jihadi invaders into Kashmir, was unprecedented in not only the training of female cadets, but also in the way that women of many different castes, classes, and religious creeds bound together as a unit 'to serve the common mission of defending their honour and dignity, by bearing arms' (Misri, 2013). Misri described the tribal invaders from Pakistan's former NWFP as 'looting their way across Kashmir, set upon taking Srinagar, sparing not even the convent of St. Joseph from murder and rape'. Fearing the worst, the Maharaja fled to Jammu leaving Abdullah left to call for 'volunteers to resist the aggression and defend the mother land' (ibid). Misri describes the Jammu and Kashmir national militia as having rudimentary weapons and that they were trained in order to fight the invaders until Indian security forces arrived upon the signing of the Instrument of Accession. The women's wing, Misri asserted, was formed in order for women to defend themselves in the event of Srinagar's fall. The role of the women's militia was to be trained in weaponry for military support, but also to provide community support to displaced families and to women refugees who were trauma survivors. Beyond this still, Misri claims that the WSDC was an engine for change that 'set into motion a transformative process by opening up new vistas for women's emancipation and empowerment.' Women affiliated with the WSDC, or purportedly influenced by the new role of women in an otherwise patriarchal society, came to prominent leadership positions in NGOs and as part of the 'Quit Kashmir' movement.

Throughout the chaos, Pakistan and India were both trying to secure Kashmir for their respective countries. Seeing the revolt in the districts were being exasperated by

infiltrations from not only tribesmen but from Pakistani soldiers on leave, the Maharaja finally decided to seek military aid from India (Ganguly 2001: 16-17). Threatened with a rebellion on the state's eastern frontiers and with the invasion of tribesmen from Pakistan; the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, signed the now hotly-contested Instrument of Accession in October of 1947 agreeing to join India in exchange for Indian troops to reclaim the territory. Claiming that Pakistan was responsible for an invasion of territory rightfully belonging to India, Jawaharlal Nehru (first Prime Minister of India) decided to take the dispute to the United Nations. Although even the United States accepted the validity of the Instrument of Accession at first, they soon rescinded and left India feeling like it had been treated as being on the same level as whom it thought was the aggressor state, Pakistan (Schaffer 2009: 17). Eventually hostilities were ended between the two newly independent states with a ceasefire established January 1, 1949 (Ganguly 2001: 17). Three wars later, the ceasefire line remains virtually intact and is known as the Line of control (LoC). Today the state is divided between Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK). The state of Jammu and Kashmir in IAK is comprised of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. PAK is comprised of the Northern Areas and Azad, or Free, Kashmir.

Post-Partition Azadi Movement through the Insurgency (1947-1987)

With the Maharaja Hari Singh's hopes to remain peacefully independent shattered, he and his family fled in late October 1947 seeking the Government of India's assistance with restoring peace on 24 October (Schofield, 2010: 53). On 27 October boots were on the ground in Kashmir. As preluded to previously, the signed accession of the state of J&K over to India has been hotly contested. The request for military assistance was at the clear cost of accession to India, and as thus it has been argued that the accession was signed under duress. Schofield notes Sign as writing, 'Naturally, they cannot send the help asked for by me without my state acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your government' (2010: 54). Historians such as Alistair Lamb (1993) disputed the timetable given by the Indian defense committee members pressing for accession documents. Witnesses have conflicting stories of impossible journeys and essentially being in two places at once. How could the maharaja have signed the accession papers

on 26 October when he was busy fleeing Srinagar at the time? Prem Shankar Jha (1993) provides a response based not on eye witnesses but on declassified documents by suggesting that the Instrument of Accession was actually signed on 25 October 1947 *before* Hari Singh fled Srinagar for Jammu, thus proving the document's legality. Unfortunately regardless of which version is true, for Indian troops to be on the ground and ready on 27 October, as Lamb argues, troops were already in place (1993; Schofield, 2010). By November 1947 regular troops from India and Pakistan were fighting for territory gains and the dispute eventually went to the United Nations Security Council on 1 January 1948 (Ganguly, 1997: 11). The Instrument of Accession is disputed today not only on grounds that it was acquired under duress, but also by Kashmir freedom activists that Kashmir never belonged rightfully to Singh at all and therefore the legality was in dispute.

Over the coming months, several statements and resolutions were adopted which would have significant impact on the azadi movement going forward. First, Nehru had already pledged to give the people of Kashmir a fair referendum to determine their future, which would become a resolution in the form of a mandated plebiscite agreed to as of 5 January 1948 (Bose, 2003: 38; Habibullah, 2008: 21). Second, Abdullah, the interim Chief Minister of J&K expressed his lack of desire to join with Pakistan (Abdul, 1984; Habibullah, 2008: 20). As previously stated, by this time, Nehru and Abdullah had become closely aligned, with Pakistani leadership claiming he had 'been purchased' with Congress money (Bose, 2003: 38). The third important factor to be pointed out was that despite the alliance Abdullah had with Nehru and his ideological difference with Pakistan, he soon promoted a third option for the state of J&K: independence.

A ceasefire line was finally drawn up after a truce in January 1949, and it was expected at the time for the UN resolution of a plebiscite and troops withdrawal to take place shortly thereafter. When neither of those things happened, a growing demand for a plebiscite with the independence option was being made in the Valley. By 1956, it became clear that the plebiscite would not happen when the suggestion was made by Indian leadership to make the ceasefire line a permanent state border (Bose, 2003: 42). This request would continue to be rejected by Pakistan leadership and be unpopular with Kashmiri freedom activists, regardless of desire to join Pakistan or to become an independent entity. Abdullah, despite being openly pro-India was also courting US interests to support an independent Kashmir covertly (Schofield, 2010: 77; Akbar, 1985).

Although this was never popular with either the governments of India or Pakistan, both sides of the now Line of Control (LoC) did offer autonomy to the regions they were governing. In Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK), a special status was proposed in the Indian Constitution in October 1949, Article 370, which accepted that the state of J&K would not completely merge with the Indian Union until it was ready to do so (Schofield, 2010: 78). The Article provided for a Constituent Assembly of 100 seats which would be independent from the Indian government except for matters of defense, foreign affairs and communications (Behera, 2003: 38). In addition, the State would have permission to fly its own flag and use for its Chief Minister to awarded a title more culturally significant, *wazir-e-azam* *ibid.*). Although autonomy for Kashmir was accepted, it became clearer that independence never would. This was especially made clear when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested in August of 1953 on grounds that he was promoting secession from India (Behera, 2003: 41).

What remains a quiet period for the history of Kashmiri opposition to Indian rule was actually a time when, Malik (2019) argues, women's resistance in Kashmir shone. Inshah Malik (2019) in her book *Muslim Women, Agency, and Resistance Politics*, she aims to understand the 'historical and deliberate nature of women's agency in the resistance politics of Kashmir, in which women are not merely accidental victims but conscientious resisters' (3). She aims to bring to light women's resistance as it also helps to engage with 'local history of resistance in Kashmir' (*ibid.*). In a sense she does for Kashmiri women what subaltern historiographers have done for underrepresented historical actors. After the incarceration of Abdullah, his wife, Akbar Jehan, became a political leader for the Plebiscite Front and was instrumental in encouraging women's activism, even if it was disproportionately targeting the upper classes (Malik, 2019: 40). The ideals of the azadi movement appealed to Kashmiri women and they took on roles of protecting male separatists in public spaces, for example, leaving them at home while they went out to protest. Although the intention was to save their men from being captured, killed or disappeared, women also suffered through being beaten and incarcerated (Malik: 2019). In this manner, lower caste women would demonstrate without the safety net offered to their upper caste counterparts. Zaine, in an interview discussing women's roles in resistance during the 1950s and 60s recalled that whereas men might have been more vulnerable, women were empowered (Malik, 2019: 46). Zaine

claimed that '[M]any a time we asked our men to stay indoors while we went out to protest against the state administration and police forces' (ibid).

Abdullah was still in promotion of the plebiscite implementation despite being perceived as corrupt and his predecessor, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed 'The Builder' was put into power in his stead. Under Bakshi, the Constituent Assembly formerly ratified J&K's accession to India in 1957 (Schofield, 2010: 94). During Bakshi's reign, India faced a devastating defeat at the hands of the Chinese until the Chinese declared a unilateral ceasefire in October of 1962 (Schofield, 2006: 97). India and Pakistan were drawn into bilateral talks at the nudging of the United States, but shortly after Abdullah (during his short stint of freedom) had convinced the two Prime Ministers to meet, Nehru died 27 May, 1964. The new Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was busying himself with consolidating his new power base quickly re-incarcerated Abdullah and without a firm support base the talks soon went sour (Schaffer 2009: 104).

With Pakistan and India both failing at their UN mandated requirements to withdraw troops and to implement a plebiscite, and with the growing distrust in INC granting independence or even permitting continued autonomy for the State, the Plebiscite Front (PF) was formed. Abdullah's right-hand man, Mir Afzal Beg, had launched the All Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front (Akbar 1985: 252). A similar movement was also launched in Azad Kashmir, but with a division on whether Kashmir should be independent or join Pakistan. It was from this movement that the armed wing, the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front was formed in 1965 by Maqbool Butt and Amanullah Khan, to be modelled after Algeria's successful armed struggle against the French (Schofield, 2010: 114).

A combination of the above listed events led to the calculations of Pakistan President Ayub Khan and the foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to infiltrate Kashmir in 1965. The most important event, however, was the disappearance of a holy relic, the Hair of the Prophet, from the Hazratbal Shrine in 1963 (Behera 2006: 42). The Action Committee was formed to recover the relic and after its mysterious reappearance to confirm its authenticity. The Committee originally united the Muslims that wanted independence or autonomy with those that wanted to join Pakistan, but it eventually split off with Mirwaiz Farooq (successor of Yusuf Shah) taking the name Awami Action Committee (Malik 2005: 111). The theft of the relic led to increased political activity among the Muslims and the agitation after the incident led the Pakistani leaders to believe that

the Kashmiris were ripe for rebellion (Malik 2005: 121). Knowing that India had increased their military capability, the military strategy of Pakistan was to infiltrate several thousand men into Kashmir, distribute arms and encourage an armed revolt of the Kashmiris who have mobilized along religious lines and were generally fed up with the oppressive Indian rule (Ganguly 2001: 40). From 1962, Pakistan was training young men for guerrilla warfare at militant camps (Bose, 2003: 83). Meanwhile, Butt, the force behind the militant J&K National Liberation Front, covertly infiltrated IAK and began to set up sleeper cells and trained locals in sabotage (Schofield, 2010: 115). He was arrested in 1966 but managed to escape his death sentence two years later by being helped back to Azad Kashmir (ibid).

The Pakistan administration's assumptions that anti-Indian sentiment translated into pro-Pakistani sentiment were greatly miscalculated. In fact, instead of welcoming the infiltrators, the Kashmiris were mostly either indifferent or outright hostile (Malik 2005: 122). The Indians were quick to launch a counter-offensive and Pakistan was quickly defeated. Ayub Khan never recovered politically and was overthrown. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was similarly alleviated of his position and later executed after his defeat from India in the 1971 war which made Bangladesh an independent state and by the signing of the highly unpopular Simla Agreement which made the ceasefire line a more or less permanent Line of Control (Ganguly 2001: 79).

What was achieved during this time, was establishing underground activity by militant outfits as well as activists in protest of the brutal suppression of protesters, the rigging of elections, and the water-down state of 'autonomy' the state of J&K had. These would all weigh heavily on the future movements in the Valley – those violent and those nonviolent movements. Security force oppression and laws passed to strip prisoners of their rights during the decades leading up to the insurgency would also set a dangerous precedent for how India would handle uprisings.

The Rise of the Militant Insurgency through the New Azadi Movement (1987-2008)

Sheikh Abdullah did not return to power until after Indira Gandhi called for fresh elections in 1977 after the long state of emergency (Akbar 1985: 273). His administration was once again marred by corruption, cronyism and authoritarianism. Press censorship and a lack

of concern for parts of the state outside of the Kashmir Valley led to widespread riots in Ladakh and Jammu, where eight demonstrators were killed (Malik 2005: 148). Before his death in 1982, he appointed his son, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, as his successor. In relatively fair elections, the younger Abdullah won by a landslide and in trying to separate himself from his father's reputation rejected an electoral alliance with Congress in an effort to retain the Kashmir identity of the National Conference (Dasgupta 2005: 249). However, after being deposed he found the only way to be restored to power was through a National Conference-Congress alliance. He was re-elected in 1987 through rigged elections which alienated the new coalition of pro-Muslim parties, the Muslim United Front (MUF). People became disillusioned with the electoral process and when the MUF saw themselves as cheated of victory, they splintered off into militant groups (Dasgupta 2005: 250).⁴

The rigged elections of 1987 saw the arrest and torture of polling agents. One such polling agent was Yasin Malik who led the militants of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) (Peer, 2010:14). The resentment over their treatment, led several young men and boys to take up arms. In December 1989, the new JKLF was responsible to the kidnapping of the daughter of the home minister of India, Rubaiya Sayeed, in exchange for the release of their friends (Peer, 2010: 14; Schofield, 2010: 147). Many of Kashmir's disaffected youth during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s received militant training in camps in Pakistan or secret locations within Kashmir. Without the proper democratic channels to voice their discontent, the Kashmiri youth resorted to an armed insurrection to obtain their dream of *azadi*, or freedom, from India (Kazi 2009: 84). With the help of and the inspiration of the successful *mujahedin* who fought against the Soviets a decade earlier in Afghanistan, a sustained militancy was fomented (Dasgupta 2005: 251). Pakistan had already stepped up its efforts in Kashmir by retaining its *mujahedin* in militant training camps that it could use to infiltrate Kashmir. "The disillusioned Kashmiri youths who crossed over the Line of Control after the 1987 elections found that arrangements were already in place for training, arming, and financing a militant movement" (Dasgupta 2005: 251). Armed with Kalashnikovs, grenades, and rocket launchers, the Kashmiri militants were able to overwhelm the state police. The assassination of NC leaders, terrorizing of the people who tried to vote and

⁴ Although there was rigging of elections, the perception of the outcome of the elections led people to believe that there was a greater discrepancy than actually was the case.

the subsequent Governor's and President's rule brought the democratic process to a standstill.

1989 marked the real beginning of the insurgency (Schofield, 2010; Peer, 2010) or as Ganguly puts it 'the rise of violent ethnoreligious sentiment in Kashmir' (1997: 14). Using the term 'insurgency' is, of course, contentious and it only frames the conflict from an ethnonationalist perspective. This perspective will be looked at more critically in the next section. It is important to note that during this phase of the azadi movement, there are a lot of different narratives coming forward. First, there is the narrative of the 'democratic deficit' put forward by Ganguly (1997) and Bose (2003) that the insurgency only happened as a result of there being a lack of space to voice dissent democratically. Given no other perceived alternative, Kashmiris, with the assistance of Pakistan-backed arms and training sought to fight for independence through violent rather than non-violent means. There is another angle, however, to this narrative and that is the human rights perspective. Not only are Kashmiris fighting for freedom to self-govern, but they are fighting for freedom to live without threat of torture or violence at the hands of security forces. This latter version, the fight for not only freedom but for human rights – for protecting lives would be used to justify both violent as well as nonviolent means of resistance.

Unable to contain the situation that was getting out of control in Kashmir, the governor, Shri Jagmohan, resigned in July 1989, only to be reinstated six months later after the kidnapping of Sayeed led Delhi to desire a tougher approach against the resistance in Kashmir (Schofield, 2010: 146-147). Under his reign there were already gross violations of rights, indefinite imprisonment and an explosion of militant wings to counter the attacks on civilian, both physically and democratically. Furthermore, it was believed that Jagmohan hated Muslims (Peer, 2010: 15; Schofield, 2010: 147). With pressure from V. P. Singh's new government and hard-line BJP supporters, the crackdown on Kashmir was particularly cruel. On 19 January 1990, three hundred people were released in a house-to-house search (Schofield, 2010: 148). The next day, a large demonstration of unarmed protesters gathered on Gawkadal Bridge to protest the unscrupulous house searches and arrests. Trapped on a bridge with nowhere to go, paramilitary troops opened fire from both sides, indiscriminately killing over one hundred people (Schofield, 2010: 148). Basharat Peer reported on the aftermath of the massacre. He claimed that Kashmir was unusually silent, the shops were closed and told of people

shouting slogans heard today in the resistance movement, especially *Hum Kya Chahte? Azadi!* (What do we want? Freedom!) (Peer, 2010: 16). The Gawkadal bridge killings served not to deter the azadi movement, but to spur it on. Retaliatory violence, *hartals* (strikes), curfews, militant violence, paramilitary violence, all would become the norm over the next decade.

Like those that started the 'Quit Kashmir' movement against the Maharaja, these militants were primarily educated but unemployed Kashmiri youth nationalists (Behera 2006: 145). This new generation of Kashmiris was far removed from the Indian struggles for independence from Britain, but associated with contemporary liberation movements, especially the rather successful movements against the USSR in Eastern Europe, the emancipation of Afghanistan from the Soviets, and struggles for freedom in Central Asia (Behera 2006: 146). They were also caught up in the Pan-Islamic movement and the resurgence of Islam. Pakistan still wanted the state to cede to it as opposed to becoming an independent entity, and to this end it began to defer assistance from the independence-motivated militants to sponsor irredentist groups which supported the Kashmir accession to Pakistan (Behera 2006: 150). In fact, Chandran asserts that the Hizb-ul Mujahedin was created by Pakistan to sustain the conflict in Kashmir, rather than to work towards resolution (2006: 50). The secular JKLF were also mobilising around Islamic themes in order to gain political support and funding. Behera claims that the JKLF was 'the main force behind the expulsion of the minority Pandit community, with many of its cadre implicated in the brutal killings of Kashmiri Pandits' (2006: 151). This paved the way for the HUM and other militant groups which advocated terrorism and violence as a means to an end in a holy war (ibid). The JKLF and other secular secessionist movements were further eclipsed by the formation of pro-Pakistan groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), which were supported by Pakistan's regimes and whose numbers were overwhelmingly Pakistani (Chandran 2006: 50). Increasingly, the makeup of the militants were foreign, and whether due to the lack of support the foreign jihadists got from the local population or for a new wave of Indian military and paramilitary personnel, the militancy was essentially contained by 1995. Because the foreign terrorists were less scrupulous and indiscriminating against civilian targets than their home-grown Kashmiri counterparts, support for the militancy waned and made it easier for the Indian security forces to contain (Dasgupta 2005: 253). Despite the differences of opinion as to whether or not Kashmir should accede to Pakistan or be

an independent state, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) for some time united the various separatist organization under the singular theme of fighting Indian rule (Kaur 2006: 22). Formed in 1993, and still in operation today, the APHC split off into two groups in 2003 with a more moderate Mirwaiz-led group. The split was formed after Sayeed Geelani protested the fielding of candidates in state assembly elections by a faction of the APHC (Kaur 2006: 23).

During this period of conflict, several laws were in force which facilitated the erosion of law and justice protections for those accused of being militants and civilians alike. The International Commission of Jurists, who conducted investigations in Kashmir in 1993 labelled some pieces of legislation as 'draconian' (Schofield, 2010: 170). Constitutional legitimation of long-term detention without charge was enshrined in the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA) (ibid.: 171). TADA, or the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act was in force until 1995 and permitted for the detention of those engaged in acts or speech that supported or questioned the legitimate 'sovereignty or territorial integrity of India, or which is intended to bring about or supports any claim for the cession of any part of India or the secession of any part of India from the Union' (ibid.). The third popularly-referenced act is the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, or AFSPA. This legislation is particularly notorious because it provides purported impunity for security forces active in the state, granting them special legal protections. The PSA and AFSPA are legal protection for security forces still in use today and is cause for activist backlash.

The period of militancy did begin to die down in the late 1990s and by 2002 there were very few militants still active in Kashmir. In 1996, state assembly elections were held for the first time in nine years and although the NC had won the elections, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the secular opposition to the NC (Dasgupta, 2005: 255). Fear from militants attacking voters and those disillusioned with the political process skipped voting, however, and those like many other elections in Kashmir were perceived as not legitimately reflecting the people's will. As a means of appearing to represent the people of Kashmir, the political parties have been running on the platform not in opposition to secession, but merely as a necessary step to better governance and stability in the Valley (Chowdhary 2009: 11). By the time the 2002 elections rolled around, people voluntarily voted because it was in their best economic

interests to do so, but they continued to support and attend protests organized by the APHC.

The Contemporary Movement for Azadi (2008 – 2014)

The contemporary movement for azadi has been largely peaceful. Although the militancy has all but petered out, the people of Kashmir have participated in massive protests, much like what was seen in the 1990s. The Amarnath agitation over the transfer of land to the Shrine Board to facilitate a Hindu pilgrimage site in IAK quickly evolved into a renewed call for azadi in 2008 (Tremblay, 2009). The warmer months of 2008 has been claimed as the 'most widespread and sustainable mass uprising in over a decade' (Roy, 2011: 57). These protests, argue Arundhati Roy, have been in response to 'years of repression in which tens of thousands had been killed, thousands had been disappeared, and hundreds of thousands have been tortured, injured, raped and humiliated' (2011: 57). The significance of the events leading up to 2008's protests are fondly remembered by eyewitnesses that I have interviewed who claimed that 'everyone' was in the streets and one respondent claimed that he thought that freedom for Kashmir was assured. Despite the significance of the events of 2008 for local activists, however, I would argue it was the 2010 protests and the social media campaigns that spread awareness of the azadi movement internationally.⁵

In 2010, nearly two decades after the insurgency, the new generation of youths have defied curfew orders and came out to protest *en masse*, and pelt stones at security forces that had responded with gunfire (Polgreen 2010). After more than ten years, Indian military forces flooded the streets of Kashmir's summer capital, Srinagar, to combat stone pelters who had been protesting with force after a 17-year old was killed by a tear gas

⁵ Arundati Roy (2011) and Reeta Tremblay (2009) highlight the significance of the 2008 protests from a scholarly perspective while several respondents highlighted the 2008 mobilisations in the Valley as personally significant. However, from an international perspective it was the protests of 2010 and the prominence of activists on social media and international television and news outlets that brought the uprisings more broadly to an international audience. Examples of these are 'Stony Ground' and 'A Cyclical Problem' (2010) *The Economist*; Polgreen (2010) 'Indian Forces face Broader Revolt in Kashmir' *The New York Times*; and several articles appearing in *CNN* during the period by Ahmad, M. such as 'Death Toll in Kashmir at 105 as four die Sunday from injuries.'

shell on 11 June 2010⁶. During what has been dubbed the 'summer of unrest,' curfews (some 24 hours) and political shut-downs in the Valley were commonplace. The APHC leader, Geelani, had been organizing protests and strikes by issuing protest calendars (Geelani Releases Fresh Protest Calendar, 2010). This wave of the Kashmiri freedom movement is marked by protests, demonstrations, Facebook posting, blogging, YouTube videos, independent journalism, and even stone pelting. Some basic demands for this new call for azadi have been highlighted by the JKLF and the more prominent APHC, such as the repealing of laws which protect security forces from being tried for their actions. Beyond basic human rights claims and the demands for justice, however, there is also an equal demand for azadi from Indian occupation. Organizations such as KSM seem to present a message advocating for an independent Kashmir, while presenting the documented human rights abuses to an international audience.

New Kashmiri voices emerged during these times such as in Fahad Shah's (2013) edited book *Of Occupation and Resistance* which is one of the first books to come out post 2010 to shine light on the new movement from the perspective of Kashmiris. It also very clearly outlines some of the human rights abuses that have occurred during the protests. Shah claims that since 2008, Kashmiris have been 'reclaiming the streets' during the summer months, 'coming out in massive demonstrations, sometimes hundreds of thousands strong...' (2013). With the help of social media, Kashmiris were organizing themselves like never before and were managing to enforce the protest calendars and to give regular updates via social media feeds on where shutdowns were happening and when protests were happening, and also when someone was martyred or injured. Despite coming out armed with stones, the Indian security forces, argues Shah, were prepared to fight a militant insurgency. Crowd control measures were cruel and when they could no longer get away with using live rounds they moved to pellet guns and sling shots (Shah, 2013). Shah describes the brutality of these new tools:

6 As reported in several news articles in and beyond South Asia, a 17-year old student returning from school was reportedly struck with a tear gas cannister in the head and instantly killed. The student, Tufail Matoo, was purportedly a bystander in an exchange of stone throwing and armed uniformed personnel. See Jamwal, B.A. (2010) 'Fueling the Rage in Kashmir' *Economic and Political Weekly*; Kaul, S. (2011) "An' You Will Fight Till the Death if It..." *Social Research*; 'Kashmir Burns Again as India responds to dissent with violence' (2010) *The Independent* for more background on the clashes during the 2010 'summer of unrest.'

'They were loading catapults with a vicious charge of glass marbles, and this abomination led to permanent damage to the eye and sometimes even blindness for scores of young protesters' (2013).

This type of asymmetrical conflict has been typical of the Indian response to protest and assembly in Kashmir.

There have been other developments in India and in the Valley during these years. The main opposition to J&K's National Conference, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) won the most seats in the 2014 elections, resulting in Mehbooba Mufti becoming the first female Chief Minister in the state (BBC News, 2014; Bukhari and Masroor, 2016). Immediately, she was placed in the precarious position of forming a coalition government with the BJP, who also made a strong showing in the elections (ibid). In elections to determine the Prime Minister in India, Modi beat the Congress Party's Rahul Gandhi (Laughland and Weaver, 2014). With the PDP and BJP at odds in the state and Modi at the helm of the central government, this has caused much trepidation in J&K over the BJP stance to eradicate any special provisions in the state, including the abrogation of Articles 370 granting some forms of autonomy such as the state's own flag and constitution and 35A which bars non-residents from owning property and other nuanced provisions (NDTV, 2019). These developments and the continued dominance of the BJP has led to increased tensions in the state.

Scholarly literature on Kashmir has begun to shift from foreigners writing about Kashmiris to Kashmiris writing about their own experiences. In one such work, Kaul and Zia (2018) 'Knowing in Our Own Ways: Women and Kashmir,' the intention is explicit in bringing to light Kashmiri female scholars who are actively engaged in research which connects the political dispute with the gendered aspects of the conflict (33). The work, although written by female Kashmiri scholars brings to light not only the gendered dimensions in an academic tone, but also actively reclaims voices in Kashmir that have been sidelined. Like Malik's (2019) contribution to restoring women's agency in the history of the conflict, the works bring to bear how important the role of women has been for sustaining the movement for independence. They have changed the narrative surrounding occupation and militancy and on seeking justice for human rights abuses. Female activists and lawyers along with their male counterparts have contributed to works such as the document which brings to light the use of systematic torture in Kashmir, *Alleged Perpetrators* (2012), discussed further in

chapters seven and eight of this thesis. Other reports such as the United Nations 'Report on Human Rights in Kashmir' calls out both Pakistan and India for human rights abuses and calls for accountability for violations, past and present (OHCHR.org, 2018). Although calling for more transparency on both sides, the report focuses on IAK where armed forces used excessive force during demonstrations from 2016 through 2018 (ibid). Kaul and Zia (2018) assert that despite this evidence, these reports are rejected and subject to criticism in the Indian media, sowing doubts about the truths surrounding violence against civilians in Kashmir. In light of this, grassroots activists and professional legal advocates have had an extremely important role in the contemporary freedom movement. Contemporary activist developments and the increased role of women in the azadi movement will be discussed further in the third chapter, 'The New Kashmir Freedom Movement.'

Competing Narratives

The following section first identifies the roots of the literature on ethnonationalism, especially as they pertain to the Kashmir conflict. This briefly explores the competing meta-narratives of the creation of Pakistan and India as this is often a reflective starting point for analysis of the Kashmir freedom movement. From here, there is a general review of the literature on ethnonationalism and the ways that this literature is applied differently, and perhaps unfairly in different circumstances, such as the highlighting of Islamic fundamentalism at the expense of the growing rise of right-wing Hindu ideology. From here there is an analysis of an overarching Kashmir identity as one that is reflexive to current events and often on the defensive as it is viewed as a subaltern identity. A new, or perhaps more nuanced Kashmiri cultural identity is viewed as emerged and salient in the context of contemporary transnational movements is then analysed.

Ethnonational Identity in the Kashmir Conflict

A nation is generally referred to as a group of people which identify a common birthplace or origin and that this nation is the 'central principle of political organization' (Heywood, 2007: 143). Common features of the nation are the perception of a shared common

culture, which may not only be a common birthplace, but also include a common language, religion, and/or history (Heywood, 2007: 148). The roots of nationalism's evolution into a term with political overtones can be traced back to Rousseau, who deemed it the right of nations to seek self-determination; to be masters of their nation's political destiny (Ozkirimli, 2010: 12). The 'invention' of India and Pakistan and the states' divergent *raison d'être* is a theme pronounced in propaganda as well as scholastic literature. India's narrative has been one based on secularism. In this narrative, one state can incorporate all faiths, and a Muslim-majority Kashmir is integral to the idea of a secular India. For Pakistani nationalists, Pakistan was 'incomplete' without the inclusion of Muslim-majority Kashmir (Ganguly, 1997: 8; Paul, 2005: 9). Although these narratives are repeated throughout literature on India-Pakistan relations and on the Kashmir dispute, they could largely be perceived as idealized rhetoric of *realpolitik*. Scholars such as Paul (2005) and Chacko (2012)⁷ view the Kashmir conflict through a realist international relations lens and thus it endangers essentializing the conflict as a bilateral India-Pakistan dispute. Since so much text has been written that interprets the Kashmir dispute as a territorial dispute between two rival nations with very different ideas of national identity, it comes as no surprise that nationalism should be at the heart of many texts written on the Kashmir conflict. It is, perhaps, for this reason also, that at the onset of insurgency, it would be attributed to nationalistic goals, or to a pro-Pakistani sentiment borne out of the dominant Islamic religion in the valley. Nitasha Kaul, a long-time scholar on Kashmir made explicit that the conflict in Kashmir 'is *not* just an India-Pakistan issue, it is certainly *not* a Muslim-Hindu issue...' (2001: 42). She suggests that Kashmir is more a victim of geopolitics than of competing nationalisms, and those that suffer the most are the people of Kashmir who have had to live the everyday realities living in the shadow of violence' (ibid: 44). Some Kashmir scholars have framed their analyses of the freedom movement as a separatist movement (see Ganguly, 1997: 1-2, for an explicit example). The concentration of identity-linked factors in assessments of the self-determination movement of Kashmir – although not untrue – risk a conflation of the struggles for

⁷ Chacko's (2012) and previous (2011) arguments are more nuanced in the sense that she argues that Indian foreign policy is driven by an anti-colonial struggle, pointing to the non-alignment movement and more recent decisions to become a 'peaceful' nuclear state. The emphasis on my argument is that it is essentially a nuanced form of IR perspective which does emphasise centre-state relations.

freedom and justice with an Islam-centric insurgency against India. These are separate issues, even if some of the motivations for violent or non-violent resistance are similar.

Benedict Anderson assesses the nature of a national imagining, which can be linked to both the Kashmiri and the Indian nations. Anderson proposes that a nation ‘...is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (1983: 6). If indeed the essence of an ethnic national community is inherently sovereign, then it would follow that nations would seek autonomy and independence in some fashion. Thus, nationalism, or ethnonationalism, is quite frequently analysed with regards to a purported Kashmiri separatist mobilisation. There is tension then as to what sort of national imagining belongs to India and whether this can contain the nation of Kashmir harmoniously within its borders. The term *ethnonationalism* can incorporate a wide range of elements, but there is no singular definition. However, Walker Connor, one of the leading theorists on ethnonationalism offers this widely accepted definition: Ethnonationalism ‘...denotes both the loyalty to a nation deprived of its own state and the loyalty to an ethnic group embodied in a specific state, particularly where the latter is conceived as a ‘nation-state’” (Conversi, 2002: 2). Many scholars on Kashmir have argued that the separatist movement in the region have been influenced by identity factors such as nationalism and religion. The literature which regards the Kashmir conflict as ethnonational (Ganguly, 1997; Behera, 2000; Malik, 2005); however, also invariably point to other factors for collective mobilization. Behera (2006) points to the inability of the central government for dealing with its periphery and its minorities; Ganguly (1996) points to the rise of militancy due to the lack of opportunities for democratic participation and the government’s interference with provincial governments, especially via election rigging; and, Malik (2005) suggests that ethnic and regional identities are exacerbated due to political entrepreneurs taking advantage of the differences and politicizing them. Coming from a South Asian perspective, Baruah suggests that ethnonationalism ‘...refers to a wide range of political phenomena including what may be called nationalism, separatism, secessionism, subnationalism, ethnic insurgency, ethnic militancy, or sometimes simply regionalism’ (2010: 1).

The sustainability of the azadi movement has been deemed, in part, to a lack of opportunities to express demands in a democratic forum. Kohli points to multiple causal variables in the continuation of the Kashmir conflict, but in his overall summary of separatist movements in India, he purports that, ‘Given an institutional state, however, if

some...demands are not accommodated, the sense of exclusion and injustice may well turn demanding groups towards militancy' (1997: 344). In this view, ethnic nationalism may be something that arises out of a sustained period of perceived injustice. Bose (2003) and Madan (1998) duly note that Kashmir's separatist movement has been fought as often on the purported grounds of *Kashmiriyat* as well as Islamic identity; pro-Pakistan as well as pro-freedom – with some militant groups such as Hizbul Mujahedin proclaiming on alternating occasions a fight for Kashmiri freedom, for Islam, and for accession to Pakistan (Ganguly, 1996). Ganguly asserts that ethno-nationalist arguments for the Kashmiri insurgency (as experienced through the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s) are, at best, a partial explanation for the events that have led to the separatist movement, and for violence in particular. He argues that '...political mobilization and institutional decay...best explain the origins of the insurgency in Kashmir (Ganguly, 1996: 8). Bose (2003) argues against the case of Kashmir as a 'conflict of antagonistic nationalisms' and instead asserts that the Kashmir issue ought to be addressed in terms of 'democratic politics and statecraft' which can potentially be resolved through '...real and relevant methods of democratic institutionalization' (7). One of the critiques made by academics against ethnonationalism defining Kashmir or other conflicts is because the term asserts that a '...dichotomy is set between ethnic and civil forms of nationalism based on assumptions of ethnic being natural, violent and retrograde and civil being democratic, rational and cosmopolitan...' (Ellis and Khan, 2001: 171). What is deemed to be a nation is a broad concept, however two camps have emerged which define the right to self-determination of a nation. The first, primordialism, 'is the belief that nationality is a natural part of human beings, as natural as speech, sight, or smell, and their nations have existed from time immemorial' (Ozкимli, 2010: 49). In the primordial view, ethnic attachments are natural and instinctive phenomena of human existence (Malik, 2005: xv). The second, instrumentalism, prefers to view nationalism as less instinctive and more a consequence of behaviors. To the instrumentalist, a nationality is not a consequence of biological or genetic diversification from other groups, but more of a sociological concept. In either case, the concept of race or ethnicity may be used as 'a tool constructed to gain material political or other advantage' (Malik, 2005: xv). Belief in a common heritage can be a great source of mobilization by political elites whether by Islamic or Hindu nationalists.

While some of the militant factions in support of Kashmir accession to Pakistan were being demonised for their support for Islamic terror, there was a growing threat of

Hindu nationalism that was equally if not more virulent than Islamic nationalism. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demonstrated anti-Muslim sentiment and fuelled communal conflict during the 1990s in Kashmir as well as in other parts of India. The BJP, born in the 1980s is the political arm of the right-wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The BJP came into power for the first time in 1991 in Uttar Pradesh with the largest showing of seats in the state with the support of upper caste Hindus initially, but later made in-roads with lower castes (Bates, 2007: 244). The purpose of the RSS was to impose Hindu rule over India.

The BJP gained popularity because they were agitating for a temple to be built in the fabled birthplace of the god Ram at the site of a Muslim mosque in Ayodhya (Haynes, 1998: 175). Radical supporters of this idea destroyed the historic Babri mosque in December 1992 (Behera, 2006: 238). Offshoots of the RSS marched on the mosque, which was located in the BJP-dominated state of Uttar Pradesh (Bates, 2007: 274). With the BJP in charge of the government there, no attempt was made to prevent the demolition. The destruction of the mosque was viewed with pride by Hindu nationalists with violence against Muslims carried out accompanied by a slogan that 'Muslims belonged properly in either 'Pakistan' or '*qabaristan*' (the graveyard)' (Metcalf 2005: 221).

During the initial phases of militancy, over 200 Kashmiri Hindu (Pandits) were killed by 'militants and unidentified gunmen' (Shah, 2013) Jagmohan, the governor of J&K during the Gawkadal massacre was a BJP man and blamed for facilitating the exodus of Pandits, which Shah (2013) purports was fuel for retaliation so that 'an iron fist' could be used against the Muslims. Although (Shah, 2013) recognises that there had been steady migration of Kashmiri Pandits since before Partition, Hindutva forces used the plight of the Pandits and their inability to return – despite calls for their return by Kashmiri Muslims – as a rallying point for mobilising young Kashmir and other Hindus in India (Kaul, 2011: 50).

In a later development of communal tensions, Hindutva forces with direct ties to the BJP were blamed for anti-Muslim riots in the BJP-dominated state of Gujarat in 2003 in retaliation for the alleged burning of a train by Muslims of Hindu pilgrims returning from the reclaimed site at Ayodhya (Bates, 2007; Hansen, 2011). As with the destruction of the mosque, not only were no attempts made to stay the anti-Muslim mobs from murder and destruction of property, but there have been active reports of state and local

government-level encouragement (Bates, 2007: 304-5). Narendra Modi, current Prime Minister of India since 2014, was head of the Gujarat government at the time when between one and two thousand Muslims were killed (ibid). The rise of Hindu nationalism in India has indeed antagonised communal tension. Nitasha Kaul (2011) points to the sensationalized hypernationalism of the Indian media and hinduization of India in general as salient factors in communal tensions, or as structural contributions for normalizing attacks on the 'other.' In the right-wing Indian political landscape, the 'Other' such as the Muslim or other minority is blamed for structural inequalities for common people that are not alleviated by support of populists such as Modi (Kaul, 2017). In fact, the ordinary person's circumstances may instead be exasperated as these populists continue to support business elites at the expense of others (Kaul, 2017).

Virulent nationalism, communalism, and the rise of populism in India (and elsewhere) are contributing factors to a subsequent defensive stance for Kashmiri freedom advocates. However, rather than turn *en masse* to a second militant movement, I would argue, that Kashmir freedom activists have instead side-lined the hardliners in order to embrace liberal democratic values and strategies of the left. More on these developments will be analysed in the third chapter, but it is important to note that it is not just communal or nationalist identity that has been simmering since 2008, but an identity that is very much connected to contemporary liberal social movements. Without the dominance of a full-scale insurgency, we are able to better distinguish the social movement processes inherent in the contemporary azadi movement, that may until rather recently been degraded to an orientalist depiction of backwards people mobilising on identitarian claims alone.

Emerging Identities in the New Freedom Movement

Robinson (2013) worked with refugees from Jammu and Kashmir who were displaced to Pakistan to live in camps or to re-settle, often in Azad Kashmir. There she reflected upon the transformations of those advocating militant actions into a 'humanitarian jihad.' In response to the influx of organizations providing earthquake relief after the region was hit in 2005, former and would-be militants began to re-shape their cause into a humanitarian one (Robinson, 2013: xvi). Years of fieldwork with refugee and displaced Kashmiri

jihadists led to her witnessing the transition of a fundamental focus on the sovereign territory of Kashmir to a focus on the sovereignty of the Kashmiri body; from a defence of a territory to the defence of victimized Kashmiris (ibid:4). This transition is widely recognized in IAK as Kashmiris seemed to reject militancy altogether and opted instead for protest strategies, rallies, and *hartals*, or strikes.

‘This story, thus, reveals a surprising convergence: Kashmiri Muslim refugees adopted the language of human rights and humanitarianism to rethink their position in relationship to wider regional, transnational, and global communities. In doing so, they forged a notion of “rights,” as a hybrid of Islamic and global political ideas and practices, and reformulated the Kashmir Jihad as a project legitimized by the need to protect the bodies of Muslim people against torture and sexual violence’ (Robinson, 2013: 4).

Here Robinson clearly demonstrates the connections through her work with those in support of perpetrating violence in order to end violence for victims they seek to protect. However, she also points to similarities in organizing militant organizations as social ones and identifies that social and political affiliations can be overlapping as well as seemingly contradictory. Robinson also points out that supporters may join associations more for the infrastructural support they offer, rather than as an endorsement of a particular position or view. Thus, constituents can join the Kashmir Workers Association because they are Kashmiri, because they are socialist, because they are seeking to meet other Kashmiris, or because they want to promote their own pet cause, campaign or organization.

Whether due to village or traditional mentalities or inspired by religious tenets, workers’ movements and socialist leanings have been omnipresent for postcolonial diasporas. In Kashmir, we see the populist leader Sheikh Abdullah aligning himself with the socialist-leaning Nehru as opposed to the Muslim ‘brothers,’ often views as landowning Punjabi elitists (Akbar, 1985: Schofield, 2010). In the diaspora, we see Kashmiris align with Labour and with the Indian Workers Association (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011); Sikhs aligning themselves with the left-leaning Greens and Scottish National Party (Tatla, 1999). Sayigh reveals how similarly, displaced peasants in the cities formed labour movements when, in pre-Mandate Palestine absentee landlords began selling land to Jewish settlers who would not employ Muslims (1979: 45). ‘In 1925 the first workers’ union was founded in Haifa, some of its first actions being against Palestinian industrialists. Not much later socialist and communist parties were formed...’

(1979: 53). She also purports that, 'It was inevitable that a Palestinian workers' movement would become part of the nationalist struggle, rather than confine itself to purely economic goals' after the Arab Palestinian Workers' League (A.P.W.L.) was assassinated in 1947 (1979: 53) – not long before the Disaster of 1948.

Just as Sayigh (1979) studies the transition of Palestinian peasants into insurgents, Robinson (2013) studies the transition of displaced Kashmiris in Pakistan as refugees into militant insurgents and then their transition into humanitarian activists. There seems to be quite a lot of cross-pollination of strategies and interpretations of events, especially when comparing Kashmir to Palestine. Palestinians offered support for their coreligionists in Kashmir as evidenced by graffiti that supported Kashmiris in their quest for freedom (Kak, 2017). Various encounters in art, song, and in everyday discussions about Palestine and Kashmir confirm the similarities in the minds of activists. There is a common thread by Palestinians and Kashmiris that Israelis and Indians respectively were skewing demographics in their regions which would erode the only claim to power either has in their fights for freedom: being a quantitative majority. Sayigh, in her work with Palestinian refugees, expressed a common theory that Jewish settlers purposively bought up land in a strategic manner 'aimed at winning the confrontation that the Zionist movement's military arm had begun to plan' (1979: 39). Cause for alarm over demographic shifts through these land acquisitions did have merit, as they did and still do threaten to alter the demographic landscape in Palestinian territories. When a large chunk of Kashmiri land was transferred to a Hindu shrine board in order to facilitate the popular Amarnath *yatra* (pilgrimage), Kashmiris became alarmed and protested in large numbers as they feared it would mark the beginning of a government attempt at altering the demographic composition in the Valley (Tremblay, 2009).

Kashmiriyat, or Kashmiri-ness, is a frequently visited contentious concept of an overarching Kashmiri identity that seems to overcome linguistic, religious, ethnic and other barriers. However, as Rao points out, prior to Partition, the term did not emerge as a rallying point for political mobilization in the Valley (1999). It was only just before Partition that a Kashmiri identity as a political identity had emerged, and this should be taken in context of not only a Muslim call for a homeland with an independent Pakistan, but several other self-determination movements that were pressed in the lead-up to partition. Kashmiriyat could be viewed as an emergent political identity rather than a primordial identity that has existed since time immemorial. As a political identity it is one

which is fluid and takes shape over time and in relation to events. Bolognani similarly confirmed during her field research with Kashmiris in the diaspora in the United Kingdom that a Kashmiri identity as a political one has rarely emerged (2011:121). This does emerge, however, in relation to particular events such as the Kashmir Identity Campaign which pushed for the recognition of the Kashmir identity as opposed to being tied to choosing either Pakistan or India as a nationality when filling out census forms in the UK (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011). Campaigns such as this, or reactional protests in the UK against the killing of protesters in IAK throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s serve to politicise a Kashmiri identity in the diaspora. However, in other circumstances, it may be apparent that one identifies with a more regional affiliation or identity such as Mirpuri. More on the personal and selective distinction of identity among the diaspora will be analysed in the fourth chapter.

When introducing and analysing the distinct, however malleable and salient identities of Kashmiris active in the freedom movement, it is important to note that it is not only a political identity that takes form in response to shared trauma or campaigns, but a cultural identity which emerges. The 'political' as opposed to the 'cultural' identities and sense of belonging to the Kashmir community are important distinctions in this research. In my own research, several respondents who have spent the majority of their lives in the UK did not feel they had a stake in Kashmir's territorial resolution and did not feel so passionately about whether the territories of Jammu and Kashmir should go to either Pakistan or India, but were passionate about Kashmiris given the option to choose. Kashmir freedom activists also tended to be active participants in other campaigns and causes that could be located on the left of the political spectrum – anti-war, feminism, anti-racism, supporting self-determination and even supporting socialism to some extent. The overarching cultural-political identity that was uncovered in both direct conversations and observations and in literature surrounding KSM and affiliate events was this culture of resistance. This culture of resistance is explored more in-depth in chapter four of this thesis, but it is important to note here that it is a slightly more nuanced take on the politicized identity.

The large Pakistan Kashmiri diaspora have certainly done much to unite in a cause for a reunited and independent Kashmir in terms of second and third generations, but, root mobilisations were planted in labour movements and workers' campaigns (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011). Transnational protest movements from British Kashmiris

earlier on were aimed at protesting the construction of the Mangla Dam which flooded Mirpur and caused further mass migration to the UK from PAK in the 1950s (ibid: 116). Evidence from Roger Ballard (1991) suggests that migration from the Kashmir and especially from the regions of Azad Kashmir such as Mirpur have seen chain migration for many decades before Partition. These migrations began in order to find better economic opportunities and eventually led to the large diaspora of Mirpuri Kashmiris in the United Kingdom. The Mangla Dam incident exasperated the exodus of Mirpuris. Faulting Pakistan policies for the destruction of their homes for a dam benefiting other regions of Pakistan, they lost faith in Pakistan. This, along with campaigning from Kashmiris from other parts of the region who fought to reclaim their identities as Kashmiris – as opposed to Indians or Pakistanis – most probably had impact on Mirpuris attempts to reclaim their identity as distinct from Pakistan. This identity, I would argue is one that is both cultural as well as political. It is cultural in the sense that Mirpuris saw their regional identities as distinct from other parts of Pakistan and other parts of Kashmir. It is political because support for an independent Kashmir by the Mirpuri community was not as prominent prior to the Mangla Dam incident nor the contemporary mobilisations of Kashmiris in the United Kingdom.

The Kashmiriyat identity is one that has been in development over time and does not necessarily reflect the pluralism of identities in Kashmir, let alone in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmir Valley alone is home (or traditional grazing location for nomadic tribes) to Gujjars, Bakkarwals, Kashmiri Pandits, Sikhs, and Muslims of various sectarian traditions (Behera, 2006). Behera (2006) and Puri (2000) have asserted that regional divisions within the state of Jammu and Kashmir has and continues to cause friction in the state, which raises the question of how much of an overarching Kashmir identity has emerged? The National Conference could not hope to provide representation for every minority in Kashmir, but what was, perhaps, more contentious was the lack of representation the NC offered to Buddhists in Leh. Throughout 1989 while there was tension and communal violence between Muslims and Hindus there was also violence between Buddhists and Muslims in Ladakh, who feared rule from Kashmir and had campaigned to be freed from Srinagar rule (Schofield, 2010: 144). While political leaders had a hard time uniting the state, separatist leaders would also have a challenging time speaking for the multitude of minorities in the state. Homogenized narratives of communalism and nationalism have always been normative problems for

political and separatist leaders alike and continue to be part of the reason for a stalemate over resolutions in Kashmir. Bradnock, in Chatham House-supported research, had reported on the findings of a survey on both sides of the LoC to seek answers to whether the people of J&K would prefer to cede to India, Pakistan, or to remain independent (2010). The report demonstrated that there would be no easy territorial resolution should the plebiscite be implemented today – even with the option of independence on the table. The plural realities of Kashmir and of the state have complicated the emergent overarching Kashmiri identity. Despite this, however, I would argue that for Kashmir freedom activists, a sense of a heterogeneous Kashmiri identity has emerged. This identity can be emphasised in various contexts as more political, more cultural, or even perhaps ethnonational. A more nuanced analysis of emergency identities is provided in chapter eight with emphasis on overarching resistance and subaltern identities.

Conclusion

This chapter began with an overview of the historical contexts of the azadi movement. Tracing the movement from pre-Partition India helps to locate the grievances against regimes in the state of J&K and the response to oppression by Dogra followed by Indian governance. The historical precedent of mobilization against oppression helps in the development of a culture of solidarity and resistance to oppression which manifests in the contemporary azadi movement. Moving on from this history is the competing narratives that arise from those analysing and those experiencing the azadi movement. Assertions of the azadi movement as being an ethnonational movement does not accurately relate to the reality of lived experiences of Kashmiris who have experienced an asymmetrical conflict. This chapter reflects upon emergent identities in the freedom movement that become salient, yet overarching identities. *Kashmiriyat* is then perceived as not simply an identity based on ethnic, national, or religious background, but an identity that binds a wider, heterogeneous community. This community is further extended beyond the borders of Kashmir through reflection and affiliation on other self-determination and even other human rights campaigns. Thus, the Kashmiri identity becomes a more fluid abstract identity rather than an identity comprised of concrete 'objective' identities. This fluidity allows for the re-interpretation of Kashmiri identity and the broadening of the movement to outsider activists who would not normally identify themselves as being Kashmiri. The

next chapter follows this development of an emergency Kashmiri identity focusing on more cultural identity connections than a strict sense of homogenous ethnic connections, as articulated and developed by the new generation of transnational Kashmiri freedom activists.

CHAPTER 2

Research Methods: An Interpretative Approach

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I introduced the research questions of this thesis, aims of the research and potential contributions to the fields of transnational social movements. In this chapter I will re-visit those research questions and elaborate further. This research, which focuses on the contemporary post – 2008 Kashmiri freedom movement distances itself from diaspora studies by looking more at the heterogeneous nature of transnational movements rather than a homogenous diaspora mobilisation. Through investigation of the KSM, this thesis looks more generally at understanding how transnational solidarities across a variety of actors, campaigns, and causes manage to form and collaborate. I explore this through looking at how disparate campaigns frame their messages to in-group and out-group activists through looking more specifically at how this is done in the contemporary Kashmir freedom movement, again by looking more specifically at how this is done through observations and interviews of Kashmiri freedom activists abroad. Although focused on activists abroad, this thesis also draws from interviews conducted in IAK to get a sense of their perspective and how it aligns with those activists abroad.

Framing or social movement framing processes are discussed at length in the introductory chapter of this thesis but are referenced here in order to locate the context of the use as an analytical strategy in this chapter. Chapter one of this thesis gives an overview of the historical context of the Kashmir freedom movement by detailing more specifically its genesis and evolution over time. This chapter further develops the theoretical strands of competing narratives surrounding why the Kashmir conflict continues to this day. Ethnic national interpretations are often found in literature that pre-dates the 2008 Amarnath land row. However, these interpretations of the movement falls short when contextualized within the historical precedents of a nonviolent transnational movement. Moving on from this narrative is the narrative developing (or redeveloping) that in the new Kashmir freedom movement, the term Kashmiri is quite fluid and not necessarily devoted to one ethnic, religious, or linguistic group. The new Kashmiri is a socially conscious identity and in the new Kashmir freedom movement it is just as likely to support liberal causes such as rights for women, ending human rights abuses, ending

war, denuclearization, demilitarization – as well as those movements for self-determination for Kashmir and others such as for Tibet, Palestine, and even Scotland.

This chapter continues from these theoretical foundations by discussing the methods used for researching the new Kashmir freedom movement. I begin by revisiting the research questions which are developed further. I then examine how these questions contribute to the literature on diaspora and social movements more generally, through looking at the specific case of KSM. I further emphasise my epistemological approach to research as being rooted in constructivism. Framing processes in general are based on the notion of social constructions and cannot be fashioned into a positivistic epistemological stance. This research has then relied on theoretical interpretivism, that is, in understanding people's own perceptions of their own activities (Hussey and Hussey (1997). Keeping this in mind, when asking the research questions I have asked, it has always been the intention of mine to understand the concerns of those I have been researching and the questions have been adapted over the course of the research in order to better reflect not just what I want to know about them but in how the movement is understood by them. Naturally, it could be argued that the results are how I understand activists to understand themselves, but this reflection is explored later in this chapter.

Research Questions

What drives people in the KSM to engage in a campaign for a free Kashmir?

KSM has become a transnational social movement which sees itself as a vehicle in the fight for justice for Kashmiris. What drives people in KSM to engage in the campaign for azadi is a mixture of personal identitarian motivation and collective identitarian motivations. Individually, one may be motivated by personal affiliation as a stakeholder in the conflict. Collectively, one may be motivated if they are part of other human rights campaigns or part of an affiliated cause such as self-determination or human rights for another group or minority subgroup. How KSM and its participants have framed their movement in terms of human rights and other sub-frames such as women's rights and minority rights leads me to infer that people in KSM are motivated through more than

personal identity affiliations. This is particularly true of those participants who hold no personal identity affiliation as a Kashmiri or South Asian.

Do they engage because of the identitarian appeal of a free Kashmir or do they engage for different reasons?

Kashmiris are certainly driven by a goal to raise awareness for their cause to an international audience. Being Kashmiri is a driving force behind participating in events as well as setting up branches of KSM societies. However, most respondents are actively involved in other campaigns other than Kashmir, which leads me to believe that they are interested in some of the bigger liberal causes than on Kashmir alone. Many are active in the Palestine movement, for example, or have volunteered in their communities, or helped raise humanitarian aid.

Could it be possible that the KSM represents a broader Kashmir transnational activist movement?

In practice, I knew this question could probably only be more of a supposition than a research question that could directly be researched by one PhD student. I would argue, however, that there is no reason to assume that it does not represent a broader movement not should it not be able, at least to an extent, explain how other transnational activist movements may operate. By the time I settled on the right question to ask, I was very much interested in how the KSM represented a TSMO, or at least the beginnings of one. This also led to me asking if indeed the KSM was representative of a much larger, broader Kashmir freedom movement, perhaps moulding itself after the Palestine solidarity movements. As a network approach would be very timely, I opted instead to home in on KSM meetings and events rather than looking in on all of the activities KSM activists were involved with. The findings could tell me something about the broader Kashmir freedom movement. In order to approach this line of questioning, I then formed subsidiary questions:

What role does identity have on actors' motivation to participate in the transnational Kashmiri freedom movement? How much influence do ethnic, national, and religious motives have on the cultural framings and interpretations of the movement?

Assessing the role of identity in the Kashmiri freedom movement could assist in ascertaining to what degree ideational constructs influence support for the azadi movement. This case study, however, can lead to enhancing theoretical understandings of the role of identity in freedom movements that have largely been attributed to ethnonationalist motivations. Ganguly (1997) links ethnic and religious national sentiments to institutional decay in IAK, or the lack of political opportunities in relation to the rise in violence as a means to effect change in Kashmir. Thus, identarian framings have been assessed in the separatist movement already in relation to changes in opportunities and mobilizing structures, and more so in response to globalization processes. The contemporary realities of the transnational Kashmiri freedom movement – the presence of a mobilized diaspora as well as other transnational activists – is not, however, accounted for in available research on the Kashmiri movement, other separatist movements that have taken on a transnational dimension, nor located in the research on transnational diaspora. This research acts at bridging this gap by using the novel approach of extending social movement theories on framing processes to the role of identity in the movement.

Researching identity of actors in the azadi movement was not as easy task as the population was heterogeneous and activists came from various campaigns and with various grievances or reasons for attending events and meetings. In order to make sense of all of this information, a strategy of identifying how activists framed their reasons for participating was deployed. Initially, this was done in an effort to understand how much influence popular movements have had on the azadi movement. Although I came to answer this in some ways, as I was working closely with a smaller set of individuals, instead the question turned to:

How are Kashmir freedom activists framing their movement in an effort to increase support from an international audience?

The total number of Kashmiris affiliated with the University of Edinburgh would not be enough to start a university society there (which needs twenty signatures just from students) nor would it be enough to start a sustained movement. How would KSM ever get off the ground if it relied solely on Kashmiris? The answer is, of course, that it could never rely solely on ethnic or national Kashmiris in order to begin a movement. Kashmir freedom activists needed to frame their movement in an effort to increase support from a broader constituency. I needed to investigate how this was being done.

In order to address this line of inquiry, a frames analysis approach was used. Master frames, which could roughly coincide with identitarian framing could be uncovered in order to understand not just which identity factors are most salient in mobilising actors, but which frames are more salient in mobilising actors, or, in the least which frames are most salient in gaining support for azadi?

Does the framing of the movement fluctuate, and if so, how and in what ways?

In presentation to an international audience and recruiting more supporters, participants, and sympathizers to the movement, are the goals and motivations implicitly or explicitly being adapted to a wider audience? How salient are diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames? How and when do they shift? Does this shift facilitate discord or cooperation among activists?

The development of transnational identities and international solidarities which have been attributed to the transnationalization of social movements have been observed by such scholars as Cunningham (2001) and Della Porta and Tarrow (2005). Until now, literature on Kashmir and its freedom movement have been rather limited to the experiences of Kashmiris abroad and how they mobilize in workers' associations or campaign to be recognized as their own ethnic groups, separate from India or Pakistan (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011). Littered throughout this literature are samples of how Kashmiris stand in solidarity with, for example, Sikhs (Tatla, 1999). It is only recently that the influences of Palestine's movement for independence are being fully recognized by scholars, however (Osuri, 2016). Activists and activists have been articulating this connection for some time, however, and Kashmiris are inspired by Palestinian activists, and likewise, Palestinian activists support azad for Kashmir. Understanding the role

solidarity plays in connecting individual activists and disparate campaigns and TSMOs can be achieved through the sort of closer examination I have achieved during my research.

Interpretive Approaches to Research

Initially aiming to understand how the Kashmir movement had evolved from an ethnonational movement to a social movement, I soon discovered that the actors did not perceive their movement to necessarily be identity-based but more human-rights based. This discovery was essentially made through using an interpretivistic approach to research. At the outset of my research, I did not assume a deductive or positivistic perspective, but rather one of inductive reflection. According to Strauss,

‘Induction refers to the actions that lead to discovery of an hypothesis – that is, having a hunch or an idea, then converting it into an hypothesis and assessing whether it might provisionally work as at least a partial condition for a type of event, act, relationship, strategy, etc.’ (1990: 11-12).

Determining how international actors and those Kashmiris in the diaspora represent Indian Kashmiris deductively could skew interviews and bias observations. While acknowledging that certain theories, such as ethnonationalism, may offer partial explanations for attitudes and behaviours, it would not be plausible to propose that this is at a motivating factor for international activists (nor many Kashmiris as the literature review would reflect). A more inductive approach then has been adopted, led by hypotheses, but revised throughout the course of the research project, in a cyclical process. The autoethnography subsection of this chapter situates my positionality and the research process more clearly in relation to this approach theoretically to research.

Fundamentally, my approach to research has been rooted in theoretical interpretivism. Any given action, policy, narrative, or event can be interpreted in a vast number of ways. As Ayoob (2001) articulates, it is not necessarily in the academic community’s best interests to ‘prove’ a hypothesis or to put forward a grand theory that hopes to sum up in its entirety any given problem. The academic’s goal, Ayoob argues, is about developing alternate ‘perspectives.’ Perspectives, he purports are not set in stone, but rather, fluid and dynamic. Not only may alternate perspectives be utilized, but several perspectives may be utilized to create a more holistic understanding of the ground

realities of conflict. This distinction in the discourses and narratives often leads to negative perceptions.

In order to carry out research of this nature, one which aims to uncover the perspectives of respondents, methods were drawn from ethnographic research. Although a long-term ethnography in IAK was not possible, participant observation and attendance at meetings and events in the UK proved to be a good approach to conducting research on Kashmir activists. Many authors describe ethnographic analysis as a cyclical process which involves periods of data collection, analysis, reflection, more data collection, more analysis, etc. Oberhuber and Krzyzanowski discuss the difficulties in analysing the data after the collection period by pointing to the fact that ‘...ethnography is not a linear process that would either start with or lead to theories and hypotheses’ (2008, 190). Ethnography gurus Hammersely and Atkinson confirm that the best way to go about ethnographic analysis is to achieve a ‘...close interaction between analysis, research design, and data collection...’ (1998: 206). Given that the core of my data collection is via ethnographic methods, I have taken an inductive approach to my research. Ethnographic methods and multiple field sites have been deployed to uncover a deeper understanding of the role identities have on the construction and adaptation of movement framings. Duschinski (2009) and Duschinski and Hoffman (2011) have deploying ethnographic methods in Kashmir through participant observation and qualitative interviewing. Van der Molen and Bal (2011) conducted interviews and focus groups for a three-month duration, aimed at contextualising the new *azadi* movement through a contemporary ‘peasant resistance’ and gendered lens. The highly regarded Kashmir studies academic, Zutshi, proclaims that the best scholarship on Kashmir goes beyond repeating ‘...policy solutions without adding anything substantial to this narrative’ (2011: 3). She asserts that the best scholarship comes from ‘...political scientists and anthropologists who carry out intense fieldwork in Kashmir and produce people-centred narratives that also make a contribution to larger discourses within their fields’ (ibid.). Qualitative field work has indeed led to a more nuanced understanding of narratives surrounding the contemporary *azadi* movement.

As detailed further in the data collections section of this thesis, at times I was more participant and at other times I was more observer. This was in relation to my own sense of in-group/out-group dynamic. I was a part of the group at sometimes more than

others, posing for photos, invited for dinners, etc.; and, at other times I was ignored when requesting interviews or excluded from meetings as an outsider and as an academic. Working with an organization like KSM offered the potential to witness firsthand an emergent transnational organization. However, it also meant that I was limited in my analysis more to groups of those who could afford higher education abroad, as not every respondent was on scholarship. This is perhaps especially true in London where it is assumed that most respondents had the means or scholarship substantial enough to afford living in London – a feat that I as an unfunded PhD student found to be an extremely difficult time financially. In response to the natural critique that this may skew the research in favour of an elite group, I will defend that although there were students coming from a background of means, there were also many who were on scholarship or who had worked professionally for some time before returning to education, which was especially true for the postgraduate students. I cannot assume that every one of my respondents came from a prestigious background simply because they were studying in the UK, otherwise the same logic would hold for myself, which is not the case.

I have inserted this opinion here in order to locate my own perspective on interpretivism. Just like many other identity markers, socio-economic status and self-perceptions about influence and power are matters of social construction. And, like other identity markers they may be attributed to someone or self-defined. From an interpretivist perspective, the researcher can aim to understand that a self-perceived place of privilege does not implicate that traumatic experience is less qualified or that one's cause is less just simply because they had the luxury of studying elsewhere when there was violence in their homeland. Many of these respondents hold connections to their homeland through kin, friendship, and previous work or study.

As identity markers can be socially constructed and malleable, this also lends to a constructivist approach to research. The grounded theorist, Charmaz, takes a constructivist angle, asserting that, 'a constructivist approach...sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data' (2006: 130). Charmaz further contends that, 'Constructivists study *how*- and sometimes *why*-participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations' (ibid.). More social scientists outside of anthropology have been deploying methods of ethnography for gaining greater insight into the situation on-the-ground. As a social scientist who has accepted that identities are socially constructed, this general definition

aligns with my own epistemological stance as an interpretative researcher. Generally, Charmaz describes interpretive theory as a more 'imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon' which ascribes to 'assume emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as inextricably linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processural' (2006: 126-7). Those theoretical frameworks that have been put forth by scholars previously, such as ethnonational interpretations of the Kashmir conflict and research on Kashmir diaspora have inspired my research, but my research advances these findings with the application of social movement theory more generally on the contemporary Kashmir movement. Also, in terms of generalization, this research enhances theories of social movements by stressing the importance actors have on international solidarities and supporting similar campaigns. Perception is a critical element in understanding how frames have emerged to locate the freedom movement not as one of separation from India but as the human right to self-determination from an occupying force. It is for this reason that while being reflexive in my own position as an outside researcher, I have utilized interpretivism as a means to understand actors' perceptions.

Data Collection

This project has been explored by participant observation and qualitative interviewing in the UK in conjunction with a collection of samples from social media pages. There is also reference to a short duration trip to IAK which was partially facilitated by members of KSM Edinburgh which I had interviewed previously. Although a longer-duration study was initially planned, it was not possible. The findings of the short-term study, however, did provide with important interviews which does in some ways connect the transnational movement to the domestic one. Methods of data collection have been observations of meetings and events with KSM branches affiliated to the University of Edinburgh in Scotland and the KSM branch affiliated with University of London's School of Oriental and Asian Studies, currently the most prominent branch in London. Herein, the first site will be referred to as KSM Edinburgh and the second KSM SOAS.⁸ Qualitative interviews were also conducted with individual activists in the UK affiliated with KSM and several meetings with respondents in IAK were also drawn upon. Work with KSM Edinburgh

⁸ A table listing meetings and events attended are located in Appendices

informally began in October of 2012 and carried over into 2013 whereby KSM became a source of pilot investigation and a few interviews were conducted as a part of coursework. This initial affiliation led to contacts within IAK where a short-term investigation was conducted with a compiling of several interviews and field notes to be used as a pilot study for the PhD project. Although it was eventually discouraged to conduct a longer-term investigation in IAK, this period was informative for the PhD research as well as an invaluable source of rapport-building for further, more formalized work with KSM. Since permission was granted to extend these interviews to the PhD research, they are drawn upon. The most structured collection of interviews in Edinburgh were gathered between 2014 and 2015. The sample of meetings and events drawn upon range from 2012 through 2015. Since participation and activity at University societies ebb and flow with the academic calendar, graduations, and deadlines, most of the notes taken during meetings have been utilized for optimal analyses. During most of the academic year of 2015/16, participant observation was conducted at the KSM SOAS site. A similar number of semi-structured interviews were conducted at that site. Given the shorter duration of the stay in London to Edinburgh, in addition to KSM meetings and events and active supporters, more information was gathered by affiliated causes, with some interviews conducted with people that may be more active in another group, but for whatever reason came to a KSM meeting or event. Given that there were not large numbers of members of the society, my sampling strategy for interviews was simply to ask all that I could for an interview. My sampling strategy for my visit to IAK was meant to be a pilot and therefore was reliant on a snowball method. Participant recruitment was not strategic but based on availability and willingness to be interviewed.

Sample of Semi-Structured Interviews with particular demographic references.

	KSM Edinburgh	KSM SOAS	IAK (less-structured meetings)	Totals
*Respondents with IAK ties	4	5	8	16
Respondents with PAK ties	1	1	Unknown	2
Other South Asian Ties	3	1	Unknown	4
**Respondents not identifying as South Asian	2	1	N/A	3
Identify as Muslim	8	5	***Unknown	13
Identify with other religion, no religion, or chose not to answer	2	2	Unknown	4
	KSM Edinburgh	KSM SOAS	IAK (less structured)	Totals
Male	7	3	8	18
Female	3	4	0	7

Total number of respondents	10	7	8	25
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*One respondent identified as living on both sides of the Line of Control, or, both India and Pakistan sides.

**These are respondents who did not identify as South Asian by ethnicity. Several respondents, although claiming to be from South Asia may have identified as 'British Indian' or ethnically Kashmiri, but that their nationality was the UK. As there are several nuances, this is not represented here.

***As the meetings with respondents in IAK were unstructured and I was trying my best for all respondents to remain anonymous, this information was not systematically collected.

The interviews were semi-structured for both KSM sites, but for the period of investigation in IAK, they were more investigative and exploratory. I also was reticent to have an interview schedule and clipboard out and about as it was not practical given that I was only in IAK on a tourist visa and not technically permitted to be actively researching. I also knew the circumstances of the people in IAK would make it challenging to investigate with such accoutrements due to the sensitive nature of the questioning.

Social media sites of Kashmir student groups in the UK was also used to harness information about the group and in order to infer more broadly about the nature of the transnational azadi movement. Given the lengthy duration necessary to conduct research beyond the scope of KSM-affiliated sites, it would not be practical to engage a third site in order to engage specifically with other pro-freedom groups, or with the discourses of those not necessarily affiliated with any pro-freedom group. It is for this reason that only those social media sites which are directly related to the university-affiliated Kashmir movements which have been used. This includes analysis of several KSM Facebook and Twitter feeds, in addition to sampling the feed of the Kashmir Students Campaign UK, which serves as a de facto connecting point for the growing network of KSM societies across the UK. More on the use of social media in this thesis is presented in the following chapter on the new Kashmir freedom movement. The following reflections are on my personal experiences and strategies conducting participant observation with the KSM sites and conducting semi-structured interviews with respondents.

Reflections on Collecting Data – Autoethnography

I began my research on KSM just after the group formed in October of 2012, while working on a research Master's degree at the University of Edinburgh. The KSM launched their group after showing a BBC Channel Four documentary *Trails of Torture*. The viewing attracted a crowd of around 30 participants. The organizers were a female Kashmiri student from London and a young British man who was affiliated with the campus Palestine society. It was the first time I had seen any footage of Kashmir that was feature length and did not dwell on the high politics of India v. Pakistan. At the time, I was more interested in how Kashmiris in India used social media to advertise their movement for azadi and connect to the wider world, especially since this was highlighted in the Arab Spring of 2011 but not for Kashmir's 'summer of unrest' of 2010. I was also interested in undertaking a longer-term doctoral research more focused on confidence-building measures, people to people and track II and III diplomacy. The desire to focus on alternative conflict resolution measures led to the possibility of social movements to provide a more nuanced angle than previously explored in my own research and the research I was initially referred to on Kashmir.

Going with the social media focus but having an open mind about the direction of my future PhD, I interviewed two Kashmiris from IAK studying in Scotland and affiliated with the newly formed KSM. These interviews were very lengthy and broad. The use of social media didn't seem to be a particularly important point of interest other than it was expressed that media in all forms in Kashmir was highly censored, journalists and others who spoke out publicly against India have been targeted and detained. Also, it was here that I learned that SMS messages were banned. How was I to do a project on the use of social media to advertise to an international audience when the media was so highly censored, *and* it was unclear who had access to the internet and cell phones to begin with. Clearly social media was important as my respondents at those early stages and in later stages were all uneasy relying on traditional, mainstream media sources. From their perspective, Indian media was very biased and local Kashmir media sources were skewed out of necessity. The only solution was to conduct a pilot study in Indian-held Kashmir.

In May 2013, I went to India on a tourist visa for easier access than attempting to apply for a research visa for the initial pilot study. Wary about traveling alone, I skipped the Jammu portion of my itinerary and spent two weeks in the Kashmir Valley where I was met by a friend I became acquainted with through KSM. Security was very tight despite the rather peaceful state of things in the area during that time. I was prepared with specific tourist sites to say I was visiting but more importantly I was there to visit and to stay with an old college friend who was already waiting to pick me up from the airport. It was easy enough and I was not questioned too much. Even though I was a university student my degree program was 'South Asian Studies' so I could defensively argue that I had an interest in language, religion, history, or any number of less contentious lines of inquiry than the Kashmir freedom movement which I was sure would earn me a seat on the next flight leaving the country.

Once in I did get to work the very next day where I learned rather quickly that interviews were not set up in the same manner as they would be in the UK. I did not call ahead or schedule an interview with a leading professor at a University of Kashmir but was sat in front of him unceremoniously. I had outlined my research, but it must not have been done very well because the man only relayed a history lesson to me as opposed to discussing anything related to social media or the contemporary freedom movement in Kashmir. I had only expected to schedule a meeting and was instead called out for lack of preparation. I learned to always have with me a notebook with semi-structured questions handy for whoever my contacts wanted to sit me in front of next.

Whatever plan I may have had initially shifted to whatever plan my hostess and contact had for me. I followed their lead and adopted a snowball approach that was not selective. I had only two weeks and I wanted to make the most of it. Unfortunately, this did mean that my sample in Kashmir was limited to those they thought I wanted to speak with – journalists and professors. However, from those journalists did come access to two university students who were jailed after appearing at a protest. Another encounter with a non-professional was at the Bemina Rehabilitation Centre. On my own while awaiting takeout, I overheard a man speaking with tourists about the Kashmir conflict and joined in. I also managed to have a brief impromptu conversation with an Indian police officer over soup one evening. It was looking to be a good start.

My contact in Kashmir did set up an interview with a separatist leader, he was arrested on that day and my interview was cancelled. This sort of blocking of an interview drove home the need for caution when working in Kashmir. 2013 was a relatively peaceful year for Kashmir but there were still troops present all over Kashmir, from city streets to rice fields in the country. With text messages being banned, it seemed as though all of Kashmir had a cell phone glued to their ear. My hosts were no different and on one occasion I overheard them speaking about my interview with a 'separatist leader.' Shortly after, we were approached by two members of the security forces who requested to check my passport and were asking me questions. I looked the part of the tourist at all times. My notebook and pencil were tucked away in a shopping bag I carried, and I wore *shalwar kameez* matched with jeans for a comfortable, casual look. My host explained I was visiting a college friend and enjoying the beautiful scenery of Kashmir. All true, of course. I do not know whether or not they overheard my scheduled interview or not, but they let us go quickly after a few questions on the street and we both breathed a heavy sigh of relief. The next day, however, was when we found out about the arrest of my would-be respondent. It was usual to have preventive detention of separatist leaders during certain days of protest or strike. It was still cause for concern and proof that I – and whoever was assisting me – ought to be careful.

I left Kashmir with nearly a dozen interviews, several encounters, and very confident in my ability to meet in the future with more grassroots activists and 'average' Kashmiris from the universities and perhaps rural communities. I greedily wanted to understand in depth what Kashmiris truly thought about freedom, the Indian presence and resolutions that they would bring forth for peace. Further, the newfound confidence would mean I would focus on a balanced sample of men and women, professionals and non-professionals. I knew it would be challenging to find a good cover for myself but contacts with the University would help prepare my research visa application, or alternatively I was prepared to sign up for language classes and even had an interest in seeking out volunteering opportunities in order to facilitate a legal, longer-term stay in the Valley. 2013 was a peaceful year and I also knew I may have limited time. It was my intention to travel again for a more extended period in 2014 which would have focused more on human rights activists than journalists. However, after an ethical review by my university, I was prevented from conducting longer-term field research in IAK due to

security concerns. I was recommended to try focusing instead on the diaspora community in the UK and therefore was once again brought back to the KSM. This also brought me back to the problems that I raised in the previous chapters – that the KSM were not a homogenous diaspora community. The meetings were easily accessible, and the respondents would seem to be easily accessible. But, in practice I struggled to get as many one-on-one interviews in the two years working with KSM than I did in the two weeks I spent in Kashmir. The good news is that it provided a much more balanced male to female ratio than in Kashmir.

Field Site Specifics

Access to KSM meetings was easy as most were open to the public and my research interests in Kashmir were welcomed openly by committee members. The Edinburgh KSM was the crucial element for my access to a greater understanding of the transnational Kashmir freedom movement. In particular, the committee members were welcoming and happy for me to observe during meetings. As Reeves (2010) said of gatekeepers, 'These people can help or hinder research depending upon their personal thoughts on the validity of the research and its value, as well as their approach to the welfare of the people under their charge' (316). It was very important for me to be open about my research, even if some of my future findings would not be agreeable for all actors. I was given express permission by committee members to attend meetings and I quickly found myself to be a staple of the group. Along with the committee members and a few other dedicated individuals active in campaigns with a link to Kashmir such as Amnesty International and Palestinian right to self-determination, I was regarded as simply another interested party whose presence and occasional participation were welcomes. Utilizing gatekeepers for access to field sites has been a tool in the ethnographic researcher's toolkit. Mater (2016), for instance, while researching Palestinians in Britain gained access to interviews '...through personal contacts and a snowballing method' (1030). I have, since the autumn of 2012 at the inauguration of the group, gained access to KSM and subsequently to interview participants through establishing rapport with the group, networking and making contacts via the 'snowballing method.'

Access issues working with KSM have been nominal. Most of the meetings are open to the public at either the Edinburgh or London sites considering the group's explicit intent was to 'raise awareness' for the situation in Kashmir, my presence was welcome and encouraged at events and meetings. As the attendance at meetings varied from semester to semester, any 'body' in a chair was welcome. In fact, at the end of year meeting for KSM Edinburgh in 2014, a major complaint was inability to recruit and maintain members who actively engaged with the group. In other words, the committee member stating this was upset that people seemed happy to attend events, but that KSM needed better strategies for repeat attendance and, perhaps more importantly, more eager activists willing to organize and contribute in more ways than simply coming along.

Access to participants for one-on-one interviews was a more precarious matter. Interest in giving interviews did come in the form of intrinsic interest in the study itself, but I believe interest was also a matter of empathy for me as another student. Several of the participants were relatively advanced in their studies as undergraduates or postgraduates themselves so there was a sense of empathizing with the need to get their dissertations completed. The most difficult thing was not finding interest in giving an interview, but in the scheduling of that interview. It was difficult at times to gauge whether someone was genuinely very busy or simply avoiding my email requests to schedule an interview. Having previously been in sales, I did not let this rejection put me down, but simply offered no more than two gentle reminders to schedule an interview with me before I quit asking. The number of one-on-one participants thus was not as robust as I would have hoped it would be. However, considering the small number of people that regularly turned up to meetings every month, it was arguably representative. The next section discusses my approach to field work with KSM.

Kashmir Solidarity Movement (Edinburgh)

If a social movement is joined for many different factors as Tarrow (2005) indicates: 'motivational, ideological, and cultural,' then those members of Kashmir Solidarity Movement (KSM) may perceive themselves to be members of a movement for: freedom, democracy, Islam, Kashmiris, separatist movements, and more nuanced campaigns for human and women's rights more generally. The phenomena of globalizing a social

movement almost inherently widens the circle of potential participants. For Kashmir, although the globalization of the post-insurgency movement really had its footing in the massive protests of 2008 and 2010, these events only became crucial to the internationalization of the Kashmiri movement after the release of BBC's documentary *Kashmir's Torture Trail* in 2012. Although scores of reports and books portray the human rights abuses and widespread torture of Indian Kashmiris, this documentary gave easy access to credible information regarding the situation. Perhaps more importantly, the showing of the documentary led to the formation of KSM Edinburgh in September 2012.

The KSM is an open group of activists of varying levels of interest and a plurality of motivations for involvement. The group has only formed recently in October 2012, and has attracted students, sympathetic members of the public, and general activists involved in other movements. The group conducted regularly scheduled planning committee meetings and held events aimed at raising awareness such as documentary screenings, vigils, and somewhat more 'culturally-centered' events with food and poetry. The group also sent letters to government officials, press releases, updated their Facebook page, and encouraged delegates to attend activist 'training' sessions and seminars for better efficacy as well as networking opportunities. The primary strategic goal of KSM appears to have been raising awareness about the Kashmir issue and the group had devoted much of its budget to that effect.

I began attending meetings of the KSM since its inaugural showing of the documentary. Afterwards, I continued to actively participate and observe, piloting several interviews and fieldwork observations for research methodology courses. I have drawn from a sample of meetings and events since September 2012, but specifically targeted the period between January 2015 and May 2015 for one-on-one interviews with activists. The activists ranged from those attending twice over the course of a few months to those more active for a longer duration including committee members. The demographics, as outlined previously, were a mixture of Kashmiri, other Asian, and non-Asian ethnicities and have been active in a variety of causes besides KSM. As of this writing in 2019, the society is no longer active and the group's Facebook page was taken down. I have saved a selection from their activities from 2012 through 2016 and have used these for reference in my research study.

Field Site Two: Kashmir Solidarity Movement (SOAS)

The first two university-associated Kashmir groups in the UK were located in Birmingham and Edinburgh, however since then several groups in London have formed. One of the committee members for KSM Edinburgh had direct links to the society which formed at the University of London's School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). This was already active in 2014 when I was planning on conducting a research trip the following school year. The period for fieldwork with KSM SOAS group was from late September 2015 through mid-February 2016 to coordinate with the what I anticipated to be the most active time of the semesters for the group. This time period has included observations, attendance at meetings and events, and qualitative interviews as with the first site. Being an unwaged student also limited my duration of field study and further constrained me to commute to the SOAS campus rather than try to venture further to Luton in any attempt to reach out to the diaspora. This would perhaps be more practical for a funded study. Being a site for a much larger diaspora population I suspected that I would have greater access to the diaspora. I assumed incorrectly that the larger diaspora population would be participating in KSM and attending their events. Although some of the events held did attract those in the South Asian diaspora, it was difficult to approach people in large events to discover their heritage and interest in the group. The students were more approachable and easily accessible, and it became apparent that those youth activists should be the focal point of my study as it reflected upon youth activism and university-affiliated campaigning in Kashmir itself.

London provides a forum for collective action from not only student and workers' associations, but is an active site for protests, lobbying, and other activist activities. There are marches, rallies protests, and numerous opportunities for collaboration with other universities. During the time I was participating and observing the KSM SOAS activities, Kings College London (KSM KCL) also formed and collaborated for a week in February 2016 with KSM SOAS. 5 February marks Kashmir Solidarity Day and thus, during one week in February it is common for KSM groups to have a Kashmir Solidarity Week in February. The groups' outreach activities are heightened and thus the reason behind staying in London until this time. I ran into similar problems conducting interviews here as I did at the other site. I managed to speak with quite a few of key people involved in the organization, but some had little time for a one-on-one interview, which was probably

a mixture of genuine lack of time and disinterest in speaking to me about their involvement in the society. Another difficult task was getting people who were outsider stakeholders to sit with me for an interview. There were more Kashmiris and South Asians in attendance at KSM SOAS events than at Edinburgh and the group was less reliant on finding outsider participants. There were some, but in addition to being busy writing dissertations themselves, they also did not see themselves as an expert and may have been reluctant to voice their opinions because of this.

A Note on Web Collection

Initially, there was an intention to draw from a sample of websites out-with the university-affiliated movement in order to better identify the impact social movement frames have on the contemporary azadi movement. However, it has proven of little use to analyse the contemporary azadi movement as a holistic, if loosely organised movement. Rather, there are many different factions of the contemporary movement. For example, the JKLF has been active within Kashmir as well as in the diaspora sometime. However, given that my primary source group were young Kashmiris who tended to not be involved in the JKLF or other more established diaspora organizations, it would be difficult to infer from such a targeted study the impact KSM might have on an organization such as this. It would be an interesting path to take for further research that perhaps worked closer with an established community of Kashmiris rather than a transient and largely mobile youth movement. Thus, the sample drawn for analysing in order to assess the variable use of frames has been focused solely on KSM. I would argue, however, that this is probably a fairly representative material considering that many members of KSM do have direct links to Kashmir, with many members who return for holiday visits or more permanently then reporting on developments in Kashmir as events unfold, in a manner not dissimilar to amateur journalists. If they do not report on their own experiences, they are quick to share articles and petitions which are rapidly distributed either through group websites or personal feeds. Furthermore, there is a dominance of youths present in the visible protest movement within the IAK. The older generation may be defined rather differently than the current formation of Kashmir youth and solidarity networks that are dominant in this transnational activist space.

Specifically, I took a sample of Facebook posts for the duration of affiliation to either group. For KSM Edinburgh this was over a longer period of time from 2012-2016; however, there is significantly more data in the way of postings and events between 2013 and 2015 than when the group was just beginning to when the group began to fade out. For KSM SOAS, I copied the Facebook page on 27 May 2016 and utilized material from its inception in 19 November 2014. I primarily used material from the Facebook sites for the duration of the time I was undergoing participant observation with the respective groups rather than attempt to go through and code individually each segment. The Facebook group Kashmir Students UK was more active prior to the new KSM groups forming in London. This site was used mainly due to the cross-referencing from KSM Edinburgh. I generally limited myself to social media sites that were cross-referenced by the KSM sites as going beyond this would widen the scope of the project to beyond my capabilities as a PhD student.

Ethical Consent

For the first pilot interviews conducted in 2012, written consent was requested, and an audio recording was taken and transcribed. This was after participants were issued a participant information leaflet (PIL) which outlined the initial research project. As those participants were located in the United Kingdom, the ethical consent was nominated a level 1 and the respondents were anonymized. This was done despite a request from the initial interviewees to not remain anonymous. Since they are both students coming from IAK, I believed it would be better, however, to keep my sources confidential, especially in the event of using this information for any publications. The consent forms used for these interviews were largely based on those found on the UK Data archive website.⁹ The initial method of requiring written consent was satisfactory in the beginning, but for a further early interview conducted in 2013, it was requested that the person not be recorded. As recording and written consent would be tricky to obtain in IAK during my visit later in 2013, I decided in an effort to make all interviews in a relatively similar format, I would not audio record them. For privacy and safety concerns, I opted to not request written consent

⁹ These forms can be found online at: <http://data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/consent?index=3>

during the pilot trip to IAK. Instead, verbal consent was granted for the respondents there, on condition of anonymity. In most cases, all names have been given pseudonyms. Some pseudonyms were requested by the interviewees; others were nominated by me. Initially I referred to some respondents with only a first initial, but this was later changed to a pseudonym. Pseudonyms were chosen randomly from a list of male and female names that may correspond to the region. As Kashmiri names may be derived from names used in South Asia as well as the Middle East, I used a list of popular Muslim names compiled from these sources.

While conducting a mini-ethnography of KSM in 2013 as part of the course requirements for my course on ethnography, I found written consent to be more of a liability than an asset. Although the meetings have a 'core' group of attendees, the participants change from week to week. For events such as the KSM vigil or large events co-hosted with other groups, it would be impossible to obtain written consent from everyone involved and announcing to a large room of people that I am a researcher may only prove to be disruptive. Consent for interviews have generally been written, however, consent for observations of meeting and events have been obtained with KSM committee members which have acted as gatekeepers.

KSM Edinburgh, in general, was very open to my attendance and would ask about the research. I was invited on a few occasions to present a background on Kashmir, and I did give one presentation on human rights abuses in IAK. Throughout this time, I would always refrain from discussing my personal views on territorial resolution which included careful framing of my own messages, such as using 'Administered' as opposed to 'Occupied' Kashmir. But being unbiased is often an illusion in ethnographic research, as no person is without bias and no research can be conducted without formulating an opinion. This is one issue raised by Howard Becker in his 1966-7 essay 'Whose side are we on?' This essay, in particular addresses some ongoing concerns raised in my own research such as general sympathy for the populations I have worked with and specifically the issue of disproving ethnic or national mobilizations simply because the KSM thinks of itself as a social movement. These have all been difficult to address, during the period of field work and during the time of writing up. Although I will remain true to my decisions to not address what, in my opinion, would be the best territorial resolution, I will attest to growing sympathies for the Kashmir people and their fight for a more democratic society. I am certainly not the first Western researcher to work with South Asian

populations and it will be difficult to nullify the impact my own background has had on my opinions during the research, or the extent of 'taking sides.' For Hansen (2001), whose work involved research on communal tensions in Mumbai, he found it particularly challenging not to take sides when his own experience as a researcher identified an asymmetrical division in conflict, i.e., the right-wing Hindu groups had more power and resources and suffered less in real terms than the Muslim populations. In the case of Kashmir, it is challenging not to sympathize with the stories of unarmed Kashmiris who have been beaten or otherwise abused by well-armed and provisioned military personnel.

Thinking reflexively upon my own involvement in the KSM, I was initially certainly more of an observer than a participant. I quickly got the impression that I was seen as standoffish, rather than a neutral observer. Instead I began to gradually participate more, offering to speak at events and baked cookies for raising donations for the floods and the group. I eventually became more comfortable with my picture being taken with the group rather than trying to avoid pictures as I had previously done. This definitely helped my rapport as a researcher to let go of the notion that I was only an uninterested observer. If I were disinterested or disengaged, I would never have sought Kashmir as a topic for a PhD. Despite my attempts at being closer to the group, I was still very much an outsider. Most of the participants were well younger than myself and they occasionally did speak their native tongues if I was the only non-South Asian in the room or at the table. My experiences with a family in Kashmir was the highlight of my PhD experience and I will never forget their incredible hospitality or helping to facilitate interviews. I would be hard pressed to say that this has not changed my view on the Kashmir conflict. I have muddled my own definitions of an outsider-insider activist, but I believe this makes the research richer and more invested that detracts from its rigour.

Interpreting Results

The use of social movement frames was not inherent in the initial research design, but emerged with the onset of practical fieldwork, as inferenced in the section on autoethnography. Literature on frames analysis is extensive and there are a great many ways in which to analyse frames for social movements research. How I chose to use frames analysis in my research was a method of interpreting overarching, or master frames that emerged from data sampled. It was particularly useful to use the strategy of

finding master frames by deploying semi-structured rather than structured interviews. As I was interested in people's perceptions of their grievances and their perceptions of the azadi movement, it was important to not lead their answers too much. I did ask questions that corresponded to my research questions, but instead of asking respondents how KSM framed their message to outsider activists, for example, I would ask 'Describe in your own words what KSM's message is.' Questions such as this and 'What have you learned by attending KSM events?' permitted for the inference of framing tactics used by KSM. This further permitted for the separation of frames used, perhaps strategically, by KSM organizers and the identity of individual activists. To understand identitarian motivations by individual activists, I used a combination of demographic questions and would also ask those who were from the region if this did have an impact on their decision to campaign for a free state. Despite the strong motivation for Kashmiris and those coming from other parts of South Asia feeling like their heritage impacted their decision to campaign, the discussions surrounding KSM itself and the grievances were strongly connected to frames which emerged from the discourse. Asking questions or probing responses to clarify grievances or individual motivations for participating always led to a handful of master frames, of which, human rights acted as the solidaristic 'metapackage' for reasons to mobilise. As in-group and out-group activists alike reflected upon these master narratives, it became the most critical element in interpreting the results of this research. For this reason, the next section offers a discussion of master frames and further outlines those frames which resonated the most with activists.

Collective Action Frames: Getting people from the balcony to the barricades

Stepping back momentarily from the master framing technique and the more specific sub-frames that branch from a human rights metaframe, I now introduce the more theoretical foundation of framing in terms of how it serves to collectively mobilise. Subjective elements such as ideological beliefs help to inform decisions about whether or not to support a cause or campaign, and indeed whether or not to participate more actively in movements, however it is useful to gain a somewhat objective sense of what is wrong and who is to blame. Collective action frames essentially do just that – they help to create

an almost objective rationale for mobilising by providing sympathizers and would-be activists with a ready-made way to assess the situation and assert blame. Benford and Snow (2000) assert that:

‘Collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change’ (615)

Benford and Snow (2000) refer to ‘diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing’ and ‘core framing tasks’ whereby movement actors agree on interrelated problems which ‘fosters action, moving people from the balcony to the barricades’ (ibid). Simply put, diagnostic framing identifies the problem, attributing blame – often to someone or some group. This can be the purported human rights violations in general or a more specific problem perhaps relevant to current or pressing issues.

For much of the year 2016, KSM focused on the problems associated with the firing of pellet guns onto protesting crowds which caused cases of permanent scarring and full or partial blindness.¹⁰ At close range, they can be lethal (Singh, 2016). In prognostic framing, advocates or social movement organizers recommend solutions to the identified problem. For the problem of blindness, for example, it has been suggested that the pellet guns should not be used in crowd-controlling measures. Lobbying for discontinuing use of pellet guns would be a concrete legal manoeuvre. The use of pellet gun also tends to sharpen cries for azadi and promotes a renewed cycle of protest. In this respect, legal advocates and activists may work together towards concrete goals which often seem like reasonable accommodations for out-group activists. This is not meant to imply that Kashmir activists drop the call for the use of pellet guns and instead protest for azadi. Both are being done. However, an outsider activist may not perceive the goal of azadi as a concrete endeavour and may be more inclined to participate actively in a campaign to end the use of pellet guns. It is easy to garner sympathy from non-Kashmiris, especially for those who may have also experienced complications while protesting or assisting in a protest. Although an immediate resolution or prognosis may

¹⁰ Pellet guns, purportedly a non-lethal means of crowd dispersal, were used extensively against demonstrations in 2016. These not only cause scarring, but eye injuries, including blindness (Tamin, 2016 *Al Jazeera*; Waheed, 2016 *The Guardian*) are example news stories during this period.

be suggested, both in-group and out-group activists will further conclude that the solution for the human rights violations, including blindness by pellet guns, is an independent Kashmir – or as it is often phrased, an ‘end to Indian occupation of Kashmir.’

The third framing alignment process is motivational framing. This is a rationale to action. Now it may initially seem that the call to action would be similar for in-group and out-group activists. However, as previously explored, in-group activists identify with being Kashmiri, South Asian, or having some other connection (such as marriage) to Kashmir as a reason for attending and/or organizing events. A sense of belonging is certainly evident in constructions of the Kashmiri freedom movement when there are events where the Kashmir culture is highlighted, for example, when there is Kashmiri chai, food, dance, or poetry. However, a sense of pride in being Kashmiri is not enough to risk persecution by having one’s name affiliated with Kashmir Solidarity Movement, especially when one intends to return to Kashmir. One explanation for this is the expanding legal advocacy and NGO network domestically and internationally for Kashmiris that offer some hope of protection from detention. For example, some people involved in SOAS KSM have been or are currently involved in legal work which seeks justice for women who have been abused and/or raped by Indian security personnel. These legal advocates perceive themselves as treading on thin ice, but are nevertheless emboldened to action, probably since female activists – unlike their male counterparts – have historically been less likely to face internment or to be disappeared. The motivations for a call to arms for out-group activists seem less clear. On the one hand, most out-group activists have little to fear in the way of being imprisoned or abused, although there have been incidents of academics and NGO workers deported from India. On the other hand, out-group advocates have very little to gain beyond the satisfaction of being altruistic. So, what is the ‘call to arms’ for these activists? Other than the bond formed between those they perceived as also suffering, I argue that legal advocacy and paths to promote justice offer the sort of concrete evidence for plausible success that out-group activists need in order to offer their own support. If the Kashmir azadi movement is not framed in a manner which concretely identifies plausible successes via proof that tenuously linked causes have experienced some successes, then out-group activists will find something better to do.

Master Frames

The multi-sited ethnographic approach along with online and offline document analysis have provided triangulation in the findings in order to more accurately reflect upon the dynamics of the framing processes in the transnational Kashmiri movement. For analysis of this research, manual exploratory coding was initially used in order to find general themes. As this was a generally inductive strategy, I permitted themes to emerge, although some dominant themes emerged rather early on in the period of investigation which allowed for the consideration of social movement framing as the preferred technique for evaluation of individual and group narratives. Of these themes, the most prevalent 'master' collective action frame was (human rights) quickly became apparent. Within the human rights master frame, however, more nuanced sub-frames emerged. There is overlap here, explained more in-depth below and throughout this thesis. For now, it is worth noting that how one identifies as an individual and how one relates to the movement which one belongs is not mutually exclusive, but salient in relation to the collective action. Collective action framing can lead to the relation as being part of a collective group of aligned causes and campaigns.

Individual identity or ideological belief may not always be reflected in the individual's motivation for supporting a cause, however. According to Oliver and Johnston, '[i]deology is of central importance in understanding social movements and other political formations, and it is trivialized when it is seen only as a frame' (2000: 1). These authors further argue that both ideology and concepts of frames are necessary in studying mobilization. To aid to their argument, Oliver and Johnston drew from the pro-life and pro-choice movements in the United States from the 1970s. They purport that although in opposition on ideological grounds, both camps used the master frame of the civil rights movement, with the one side stressing the foetus's right to life and the other side stressing the 'right of the woman to control a fundamental aspect of her life' (Oliver and Johnston, 2000: 2). Similarly, freedom of speech frames are used to both vindicate and to vilify hate speech in the media and in propaganda. Women's rights are referenced to both ban and to justify wearing the burqa, hijab, or other politicized female garment. Discourse on Kashmir can be similarly muddled between ideology and framing perspectives. It is my contention that much of what can be found in literature on Kashmir

studies too often relies on ideological interpretations of motivations behind the movements. It is further my contention that in the case of the KSM, the way they have framed their movement more accurately reflects their ideological motivations that vice versa. By listening to the narratives and stories of individuals and through understanding what their grievances are based on, we can understand the motivations for framing the movement in terms of, for example, self-determination as a human right as opposed to self-determination as a right of a particular ethnic group. This does not mean, however, that all supporters have the same ideological view of what is and what is not considered a human right. For the contemporary movement, as I explore at length in the following chapter, women's rights are human rights, but naturally the ideological belief in gender equality may not be shared equally among all participants even if all participants agree that women's rights are generally human rights and choose to frame sexual violence against women in Kashmir as a women's human rights issue.

The narratives of the respondents and those narrating their struggles in meetings and through poetry or art are powerful representations of how the movement has become framed. It has been why qualitative gathering of respondents' stories were so important for this research as well as important for the movement more broadly. Narratives can be defined loosely as 'constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and place...' (Tavory and Timmermans, 2009: 249). Narratives can be framed theoretically in a macro-perspective. To explore the questions in as systematic a way as possible, I have deployed coding techniques via the qualitative analysis software Nvivo. According to Richards, qualitative coding is meant to aggregate the data record into categories as a means of reducing the data into manageable segments you can work with (2005). Nvivo 10 is an excellent tool in managing large swathes of data from multiple internal and external sources such as literature, codes, memos, interviews, observations, websites, etc. For my research specifically, I have used interview data, participant observation, documents, and information from the web sphere analysis. One issue of using Nvivo for analysis of data is a more nuanced reflection on the epistemological underpinnings of the research being undertaken, juxtaposed with the drive for a 'systematic' or 'structured' approach to data analysis that seems by and large a product of deductive logic. Hammerseley and Atkinson reflects the unique qualities of ethnographic analysis '...[f]ormerly, it starts to take shape in analytical notes and

memoranda; informally, it is embedded in the ethnographer's ideas and hunches (1998: 205). In deploying an extended case method approach, Burawoy argues for constant reflexivity as necessary in the conducting and analysing of ethnographic research (1998). Software can assist in numerical frequencies as well as developing an understanding of 'master frames,' and frame hierarchy. Triangulation can account for anomalies and variations and lead to an observation of causal links that can be explored further in order to identify the role of identity in the transnational Kashmiri azadi movement.

Some of the more sophisticated functions of Nvivo were not utilised for the purposes of this project. Word frequencies to target specific themes could be misleading as expressions may be taken out of context. The queries function was used in order to explore hunches emerging from the data. As some of the data were in picture or pdf form, such as fliers or graffiti, it was beyond my technical expertise to make use of the graphing or modelling features of the program. At the end of exploratory coding, I found that much of the codes were overlapping themes and found myself referring to hand drawn charts for visual analysis that would be too messy to reproduce. The cumulation of data collected is in one place, however, which could make further exploration of more specific questions or deductive analysis possible. For the time frame of this project, exploratory coding for themes was the primary objective of the software, and for that, the purpose was served well.

Deploying these techniques, I have uncovered master frames from exploring narratives in discourse. These overarching frames correspond to the chapters in this thesis. The 'rights' frame, as asserted by Oliver and Johnston (2000) serves to link movements together. Specifically, master human rights frames act as an anchor for other ways in which to refer to the freedom movement. Human rights is both a way to solicit more sympathy for the Kashmir cause as well as an identifying characteristic of the individual activist. In other words, someone who self-identifies as a promoter of human rights, or as a human rights activist, they will be more likely to be drawn in when these frames are articulated. Even self-determination is framed as a human right, according to activists. Even where disparate groups have a variety of motivations for mobilisation, framing the reasons for supporting azadi as a right to self-determination, serves as a consistent way for expressing support. The human rights master frame represents the overarching frames that binds in-group and out-group actors together, but these are broken down into subthemes, or sub-frames which link itself to the identity of the actors.

For example, the injustice frame, as recognised by Gamson et. al. (1982), has been discovered to be a highly salient means for mobilising in the Kashmir freedom movement. It also connects to the identity of the actors as agreeing on specific injustices lead to strategies for resistance. In Gamson et al (1982) findings, the injustice frame was uncovered as a framing technique for mobilizing workers and student movements alike. The injustice frame is a method which connects movements, but it is also a tool for motivating activists to take a stand against an unjust authority. Again, however, it is the recognition that demonstrations, speaking freely on campus about political beliefs or workers organising for improved working conditions are essentially attached to the notion that workers and students have rights to begin with.

Injustice and 'legal framing' of the issues become critical in bridging a gap between activists and advocates that can work together to achieve campaign goals. I speak at more length in chapter eight on human rights and political issues regarding the use of legal framing tactics. Discourse from activists involved in Kashmir's freedom movement alternate between narratives of victimhood, survival, and resistance. The framing changes as well from praise for non-violent forms of resistance to praise for more disruptive and violent forms of resistance. The roles of those who resist in the Kashmir freedom narrative is complex and fluid, subject to emerging events and individual actors' and subsidiary groups' perceptions of the actions taken in relation to emerging events. Reports such as *Alleged Perpetrators* (2012) and documentaries such *Kashmir's Trails of Torture* (2012) serve the dual purpose of reinforcing the communal, social suffering of Kashmiris and appealing to outside activists in order to gain sympathizers with the victimized Kashmiri. Digging deeper into the development of the human rights frame, we can identify the more abstract constructions of the trauma experienced that leads to victimization. This then must lead to the mobilization of a popular movement to construct an appeal for resisting the victimization. Without broad appeal, there would be no acknowledgment of the oppressed peoples. The human rights frame offers a ready conduit with which to make suffering known to a wider public. Chapter eight examines how legal advocacy is used to confer the ideals of azadi and justice in a manner that helps outsiders perceive the freedom movement as a human rights movement.

Oliver and Johnston (2000) discuss other master frames as arguably important methods for clustering movements together. Some of the more generalizable frames noted in their paper are oppositional frames, antisystemic frames, revitalization frames

and inclusion frames (2000: 12). The use of these frames may have various purposes. Some may be used more in order to increase appeal to outgroup members, for example. For the purposes of this study, I have accepted that a rights frame holds the other frames together, like the trunk of a tree. If human rights were indeed the trunk of the tree, then there would be subsidiary master elements branching out such as framing the movement in terms of injustices. The tree analogy works well for depicting the ways activists become involved in movements. I would assert that one would probably find a rights master frame as key for linking activists together across a spectrum of campaigns. There are other sub-frames used in order to solicit support as well, which are found in subsequent chapters. These frames are more defined in order to resonate more personally with an extended network of activists, such as framing the Kashmiri as a victim. Framing Kashmir oppression by painting a picture of a subjugated minority being attacked by a majority permits for those who support movements such as Black Lives Matter or campaigns against the implementation of legislation that targets minorities. This brings in people who not only sympathize with Kashmiris, but those who can empathise as also struggling as part of a minority group. Another branch on the framing tree would be to frame the Kashmir conflict in terms of supporting women's human rights. Again, this frame helps to resonate the Kashmir struggle with feminist struggles for equality and prevention of sexual abuse. Whereby Oliver and Johnston (2000) refer to antisystemic frames, I believe the new azadi movement frames their opposition to the powers that be in terms of resistance, which becomes a very powerful frame within which to relate their movement. The analogy could continue, with smaller branches growing out of larger ones. Like the tree, the social movement is a living entity. Part of the movement grows or branches off into certain areas while other parts may be deemed as less important over time, wither and die like autumn leaves. Although there is overlap and mutability of this tree, the largest branches identified were:

- Victimization frames
- Subaltern/Minority frames
- Women's Human rights frames
- (Culture of) Resistance identity frames
- Injustice/Legal frames

The main findings of this study have been in understanding the ways in which in-group and out-group activists have become motivated to participate in Kashmir's freedom movement transnationally. In-group, or 'insider' activists, those which have a direct stake in any permanent territorial resolution, are more inclined to participate or become motivated due to their direct affiliation with the region and direct stake in the conflict. Out-group, or 'outsider' activists are those who do not have a direct stake and whose lives would not be directly impacted by any territorial resolution. Insider and outsider activists may not agree on the territorial resolution, but they find common ground, or solidarities within which to support one another. There may be some overlap between insider and outsider activists. The concept of outsider and insider activists is fluid like many other social science constructions. The parameters I have set out on those having a direct or those having an indirect or no stake in the outcome of the conflict are useful but not static parameters. What is useful is that regardless of where one perceived themselves on this spectrum of insider-outsider, finding common ground is key to understanding the insider, if indeed you perceive yourself as an outsider to the conflict. This common ground may vary as the diversity in affiliations of activists may vary, but common ground is often found based on one or more of the following, with 'shared belief of suffering of Kashmiris' always present:

- Participation in similar campaign or cause
- Shared belief in suffering of Kashmiris
- Regional interest (in South Asia/Kashmir)
- Perception of being a minority or subaltern
- Lack of opportunity to express self on other platforms
- Professional development or networking
- Socializing opportunities/networking
- Desire to fight oppression/be a resister/challenge hegemonic power

As the common ground is a shared belief that Kashmiris are suffering, this determines the goals and strategies of KSM committee members.

Conclusion

This research began with a desire to understand how puzzling it was that so many non-Kashmiris seemed to be in support of an independent Kashmir state. The KSM vigil outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2013 demonstrated that there could be an active transnational diaspora even where there was not a large diaspora population. But unlike traditional literature on transnational diaspora activism, a new trend in global activism relies on a flourishing activist community rather than a diaspora community for sustaining some transnational movements abroad. As a divergence from ethnonational literature which revolves around a shared sense of ethnic and national community, the Kashmir freedom movement abroad seems to revolve around a shared sense of subjugation or the perception that Indian Kashmir is under a military occupation. In this narrative, Kashmiris are not separatists, but activists seek to end an occupation and an end to oppression of a minority by the current hegemonic power. With pilot interviews and observations conducted in 2012-13 and participant observations between 2014 and 2016, the puzzle of why there could be such an extensive interest in azadi for Kashmir was resolved – but only by viewing the KSM as part of a broader transnational social movement. This chapter reflected upon the strategies used for collecting and interpreting data across field site, including social media. The use of frames analysis was key in order to decipher how activists negotiated with their own identities and how this impacted their connections to the azadi movement. This further allowed for a greater understanding of how insider and outsider activists alike could be motivated for participating in the Kashmir freedom movement. What emerged from my work with activists was the use of several major ways to frame the movement. These frames are used often in conjunction with one another, but always anchored to the notion of a master human rights frame. I used the trunk and branches of a tree as an analogy for how these frames relate to one another, as a reflection of how this is done in discourse of activists and organizers alike. As a rights-based discourse is paramount in uniting insider and outsider activists, it is used to reaffirm a solidarity based on the common depiction of a suffering peoples. This is relatable to activists who are both familiar and unfamiliar with the Kashmir situation and thus provides a firm common ground for utilising tactics used in other campaigns. The call to action and tactics used are thus more universal in nature rather than relative to a homogenous ethnic or national group.

This remainder of this thesis will look into the new Kashmir freedom movement and how it seeks to portray an image distinct to the azadi movements of the past, but also how it links itself to these movements. Chapter three continues from chapter one's historical context by focusing on the azadi movement from 2008. There are linkages here to women's resistance as women's human rights becomes an analogy for the self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

CHAPTER 3

The New Kashmir Freedom Movement

The Kashmir freedom movement has its roots in demonstrations and calls for India to 'Quit Kashmir' from since before 1947 and through to today's renewed calls for a referendum to be to uphold Kashmiris' right to self-determination. Throughout this time there have been cycles of violence attributing calls for independence from India. These movements have been sustained due to the misuse of power by Indian soldiers and their enjoyment of impunity from legal retribution in many cases. The azadi movement has been sustained due to the high levels of concentrations of military personnel in Kashmir, the bunkers lining the streets, the checkpoints, and curfews which contribute to the feeling of being under foreign occupation. The calls for azadi will not end when the excuse for the occupation, militarization, and laws granting impunity to security forces are in place because India affirms it is necessary to combat militancy and terrorism. This affirmation continues despite the decimated numbers, lack of weaponry available to carry out a sustained insurgency, and lack of support from Pakistan and their intelligence apparatus to train and fund militancy. Until recently ('Kashmir Attack,' 2019) there have been sparse militant attacks on Indian security forces and those that have taken place during the majority of my research period have been by Kashmiris themselves who have often experienced being beaten and/or tortured by Indian security forces. Unlike the new azadi movement marked by largely nonviolent protests and grassroots mobilisation, the 'old' azadi movement was one involving Pakistan's ISI and foreign militants aiming to impose strict visions of Islam onto Kashmiris (Behera, 2006: 150-155; Mahmud, 2012).

This chapter explores the new Kashmir freedom movement, with an effort to capture the perspective of the Kashmiri activist, who feels they are an occupied people. I will begin this chapter by exploring the period after the 2008 Amarnath land row which marked a huge demonstration and march that recharged the new Kashmir freedom movement for the new generation as a nonviolent means to combat Indian government rule (Tremblay, 2009). From there, I move to the summer of unrest of 2010 and the fluent use of social media which gave the azadi movement a truly transnational perspective. I bring it back to reflect on the role militarisation has had on human rights abuses with

special attention paid to the role women have had in the azadi movement. Women's rights are analogous to the rights of Kashmiris and are expressed here in terms of those sub-frames explored previously: victimization, women's human rights, and resistance frames are particularly explored in the sections on militarization. Following this, I draw attention to the contemporary freedom struggle with reference again to women's renewed roles, but also to explore the new generation's overall approach to resistance against Indian occupation and how they relate their case for a free Kashmir to an international audience.

A New Azadi Movement for a New Generation of Kashmiris

More than ten years after a full-scale insurgency dwindled to a handful of fighters, Indian military forces flooded the streets of Kashmir's summer capital, Srinagar, to combat stone pelters who had been protesting with force after a seventeen year old was killed by a tear gas shell on 11 June 2011. During what has been dubbed the 'summer of unrest,' curfews (some 24 hours) and political shutdowns in the Valley were commonplace. The APHC leader, Geelani, had been organizing protests and strikes by issuing protest calendars (Geelani Releases Fresh Protest Calendar, 2010). In response to predominately nonviolent resistance, the military in Kashmir has responded with quick deployment of battalions onto the streets unleashing lethal force (Kak, 2011). Sanjay Kak (2011) reports that sixty cases of bullet wound injuries were 'inflicted by security forces in the first fortnight of August alone' of which all were 'young men in their late teens or early twenties' (35). Not all the victims were in their teens or young adults, however. On 3 August 2010, it was reported that a boy of eight was beaten to death after raising slogans for azadi by members of the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) (Kak, 2011: 29). Altogether, Kak reports that the summer of 2010 left 110 killed and thirty-five blinded (ibid).

Demands for azadi are reinforced in the context of an asymmetrical conflict between groups of young people protesting, some with stones and the 600,000 strong army stationed in IAK equipped with lethal weaponry. The youth of Kashmir are better educated than their parent's generation and technologically savvy. They have responded to attacks through mobilisation locally and abroad, connecting their struggle to other

struggles against occupation and for the restoration of human rights. Some basic demands for this new call for azadi have been highlighted by the JKLF and the more prominent APHC, such as the repealing of laws which protect security forces from being tried for their actions. Organizations such as KSM present a message advocating for an independent Kashmir, while presenting the documented human rights abuses to an international audience.

Social Media as a Driver of the Transnationalization of the New Kashmir Freedom Movement

During the summer of 2010, I was working on my dissertation for a graduate program in international conflict. I was witness to the rise of Facebook as a means to connect with an international audience as well as to understand how Kashmiris were using social media for organizing mobilizations. It was clear that social media was a valuable resource for coordinating strike action and promoting and circulating protest calendars issued by the APHC. During this time, there was also an online Kashmiri identity mini campaign that echoed earlier campaigns to make the Kashmiri national identity officially distinct from Pakistan or Indian national identity (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011). Here, the campaign was for Facebook permitting the use of claiming to be a Kashmiri when signing up for Facebook rather than India or Pakistan as the only options. The most critical element of all of this activity was that most of it was conducted in English. This meant that it was not just other Kashmiris or others in South Asia that were intended to receive these messages. Clearly, activists were interested in reaching out to an international audience in a growing international forum where, for a change, they could have a voice against an oppressive growing superpower.

The online activity was not without its divisions. As we see in today on Twitter as well as Facebook, online activism from one side results in online aggression from another side and vice versa. Facebook group sites such as Frontline Kashmir (2010) were constantly getting hacked into and received abuse from supporters of India. Likewise, for many pro-freedom Kashmiri group site there were pro-India group sites and pro-Pakistan group sites. Starting out in my research, it proved problematic to harness them all strategically. I did take the opportunity to interact with Frontline Kashmir's site as most of

the posts were in English and the group seemed happy to interact with me. Although not a part of any research project, I did pilot a survey where only around a dozen responded. Due to a such a small response rate and the inability to verify that the same few people were not answering more than once, I opted to not use the results. The survey did verify identity assumptions without asking specifically whether Kashmiris would like to be part of India or Pakistan. It instead asked whether people using the site identified with being Indian, Pakistan, or Kashmiri and asked what religion they affiliated with and whether they believed in a separation of church and state – that religion should not be a part of politics. Should Kashmir become independent, how much influence would Islam have on everyday politics? This last question was inspired by how seemingly indistinguishable pro-freedom slogans were alongside support for Islam. It was only much later that I understood ‘Inshallah’ could be a reverent ‘God willing,’ as much as it can mean ‘let’s see if I get around to it’ in everyday parlance. The results of the pilot were generally as follows: Muslim Kashmiris which identified with Kashmir and Pakistan were generally positioned towards Islam having a greater role in politics than Hindu Indians were of having Hindu playing a major role in state politics. With the rise of Hindu nationalism since 2014, however, it would be interesting to see if this view has changed dramatically.

I did not want to jump to conclusions about the role of Islam in the pro-freedom movement. As naturally, religion can be an important and salient element of everyday life not just for Kashmiris but for people all over the world who believe in gods and goddesses. This turned my attention towards trying to understand how these processes are framed in social media. The summer of 2010, however, was responded to with a crackdown in social media (Jammu and Kashmir state government censors, 2017). Given the extensive use of censorship in India, the arrests of young people posting pro-freedom slogans on Facebook, and the frequent cutting of the Internet in IAK, I could not rely completely on social media, especially those sites originating in IAK. Like Frontline Kashmir, many azadi supporting groups were hacked into or taken down just as their popularity began to spread. These sites in the past have been a valuable source of information not only for soliciting support for the azadi movement in general but for coordinating protests and strikes and reporting on areas to stay away from. They were the news that was not censored. Users reported on whether shops were closed in their areas in support of a strike or whether there was a protest, for example. I further observed that they reported

on incidents in their areas like a gunfight or looting or stone throwing and if the security forces were using force and what kinds of force, how many were injured and if anyone was dead.

Group sites are constantly being taken down, the names being changed, and the general ebb and flow of activity makes them difficult sites for conducting research. As reflected in the methods chapter previously, I have instead chosen to only take data from Facebook group sites affiliated with the student activist groups for a free Kashmir in the United Kingdom. This leaves out a lot, but as I am looking at the 'new' Kashmir freedom movement, these sites and affiliated activity such as articles shared on these sites are important facets of the groups and therefore largely representative of group activities, alignments, framing of messages and the general tone of the approach to advocacy for azadi abroad. Social media becomes inextricably linked to activity in our everyday lives and rather than being seen as a disjointed facet of the movement, I perceive it as integrated with the movement. Certainly, it is through social media that one not only promotes their cause, but also coordinate events, meetings, and combine the political with the banal which is a part of everyday life. This is part of the general cultural turn in the new Kashmir movement.

Fahad Shah in *Of Occupation and Resistance* (2013) describes this new wave of resistance as one that involves 'protest through music, art, literature and social networking sites' which have 'great reach, are viable, attract people, and make then conscious about the cause' (2013: location 90). Free speech, which Shah cites as being not only 'crushed' but 'illegal' found a new home on the internet. Unfortunately, this was not a safe space for voicing dissent. Just like attending street protests can target a protester for police questioning, so too can Facebook protests. Faraz, a student of Kashmir University reports being arrested and incarcerated for 'days of continuous questioning, involving physical and psychological torture' simply for posting pro-azadi slogans on Facebook (Shah, 2013: location 120). Whereas social media became a site for snooping on activist activity, it also became an invaluable tool for activism. Online campaigns such as 'freewaqaar.org' were created to help secure the release of a student arrested for stone throwing with Amnesty International taking an interest in the case (Shah, 2013: location 129). Shah also reports how online campaigning helped to secure the release of a 14-year-old boy after suffering two months' detention (ibid).

KSM groups also participate in online campaigns through the circulation of petitions to try to get the release of people in custody or to stay an execution order as in the case of Shafqat, a young man coerced into signing a confession after being abused by security forces on the Pakistan side of Kashmir (reprieve.org.uk: 2014). Carrying on from previous mobilisations which have been 'passed onto younger generations,' this new Kashmiri movement is very much a facet of modernity and uses contemporary tactics, often fused with more traditional approaches to protest. Advocates share videos and post events, but also raise traditional slogans, make placards, march in demonstrations, and raise flags. One of the most important influences of the new azadi movement is the role of women. As the historical context chapter previewed, women have always been active in resistance but rather than having a more supporting role, they have become lead actors in the new Kashmir movement.

The Role of Gender and the Militarized State

An analysis of the Kashmir freedom movement as a social movement takes a more holistic approach over an equation of military strength as equivalent to power and those wielding this type of power as the only actors that matter in a conflict, as may be perceived in literature on the Kashmir conflict that does not give great emphasis on non-military struggles. The rise of Sheikh Abdullah as a figurehead who dominated the Kashmir movement against an oppressive Dogra regime marked a time in Kashmir's history where the ideals of socialism would impact ideas of equality on class and gender issues alike. In 1944, the Naya Kashmir manifesto was adopted by the National Conference which stressed the future of Kashmir as a 'secular, socialist state committed to the eradication of communalism and the rights of women' (Butalia, 2002: x). Just like there is a common thread of linkages between independence movements and anti-imperialism, the rights of women are often depicted as coinciding with socialism and a sort of secularism that transforms the image of a weak Muslim woman into an agent of resistance.

Historically, women have been seen as representing a nation rather than being an integral part of shaping that nation's future. Nira Yuval-Davis, author of *Gender and Nation* (1997) emphasises the importance of women as representations of the nation 'biologically, culturally, and symbolically' (3). Despite being the symbolic representation

of a nation, Davis writes that women are often not included in the discourse of the nation as they are perceived to be part of the private, rather than the public sphere (ibid). This is consistent with the arguments laid out by those panellists speaking at KSM events on the gendered aspects of the ongoing conflict. Many of the speakers on these panels have theoretical foundations in feminism but extend this literature to South Asia and more nuanced conceptions of gender and nation. Histories of colonialism on the Subcontinent draw parallels to the struggle for independence with the struggle for agency. Attacks on the Hindu male in British propaganda or as sexually weak vis-à-vis Muslim men is an example of the way the men of a community may be perceived to be under threat by an 'other'. The threat of being effeminate vis-à-vis an other has also been attributed to the reclaiming of masculinity (Hansen, 1999), and arguably of reclaiming a male community's agency. It is also through attacks on the bodies of the Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh women that is in turn an attack on Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and their nations. The weak and oppressed, whether a nation or a woman, may be seen as contending with a patriarchy endorsing strength through militarization.

Militarization and Patriarchy

Cynthia Enloe (1984) makes the connection between militarization and patriarchy by exposing 'the ways in which structures of male privilege and women's oppression *cause* militarism' (2). This theme of connecting seemingly local issues of patriarchy and women's oppression to global issues of sustaining militarization runs throughout her works. Enloe's (2016) *Globalization and Militarism* tries to make sense of our militarised world through a rather holistic approach of understanding the globalization of militarization, a process that has gone unabated and is inextricably linked to the acceptance of violence including violence against non-masculine types. Militarism, according to Enloe, is a concept that fosters 'military values in both military and civilian affairs' (2016: 11). This includes the justification of military priorities in 'cultural, economic, and political affairs' (ibid). Enloe outlines the ideas that are a part of militarism, which in brief are:

'...the belief that men are natural protectors...that soldiers deserve special praise...that hierarchies of command are a natural part of society...that it is natural to have enemies...physical force [is valued] over other forms of human interaction

to solve differences...that any state without a full military is not a fully “mature” state’ (Enloe, 2016:11).

Militarism relies on the desire to be perceived as masculine. Strong militaries are necessary in this view, as well as ensuring that hierarchies including gendered hierarchies are intact. Upholding the view that national security means the prioritization of militarization makes it extremely difficult for proponents of demilitarization to be successful. Enloe asserts that national security decisions happen in particularly masculine spaces whereby ‘anyone imagined to be feminine does not seem to belong’ (2016: 13). Political decisions require the implementation of militarisation but they do not adequately take into account the impact these decisions and subsequent militarizations will have on everyday life for those affected. A feminist account is often not sought when considering these decisions which can in turn reflect unstable peace or further continue a spiral of oppression led by patriarchy and militarization. Militarization need not be a tool for cisgendered men alone and patriarchal concepts are perpetuated and enforced by cisgendered women as well.

Kaul and Zia (2018) also address how ‘war and occupation is an exercise in gendered hyper masculine power in the context of a conflict zone’ (35). Their edited work on women and Kashmir highlights the negative influence of militarism on Kashmiris. Alliya Anjum (2018), in her article, argues that militarism is more valued than civilian life in Kashmir (47). Here, she points to the visibility of armed forces in the streets, bloated military budgets, and immunity laws for soldiers in Kashmir (ibid). Writing during a time where full-scale militancy was still very fresh in the minds of Kashmiris, Seema Kazi reflected on the role the militarised state of Jammu and Kashmir has had on the domestic experiences of civilians (2007). More succinctly, her work draws from a women’s subjective experiences by focusing her sample on a small group of Kashmiri women. Kazi purports to challenge dominant narratives of the experience of militarisation whereby the ‘state is the subject of knowledge and where masculine (state vs male militants) experience is assumed as the dominant and valid experience of militarisation’ (2007: 18). Representation of the female in politics and in matters of the state have had the tendency to be highly essentialized or trivialized. In the South Asian context and in the Kashmir conflict in particular, the reclamation of female agency and of women’s histories have been overshadowed by a summation of experiences that seemingly portray women as

the supporting actors in an historical narrative. Stemming from the insurgency, but certainly continuing today, women in Kashmir have had a conventional role in the conflict as wives, mothers, and daughters. These traditional roles, however, have become 'politicized in the face of a gendered onslaught of the Indian state that centres on Kashmiri men' (Kazi, 2007: 34). Women, while showing public support for azadi are also being politically marginalized, Kazi argues, as because of a 'conservative and patriarchal social context' (ibid.). Her argument follows that the loss of democratic rights felt by Kashmir as a society filter into the gendered dimension whereby women feel an acute loss of rights. This, is not only by way of becoming a collective target to inflict suffering on the Kashmiri male, but also due to an environment where she suffers from greater social policing and is subjected to more regressive versions of Islamic identity than is historically precedent in Kashmir (2007: 35).

Meera Sehgal conducted an ethnography whereby she spent nearly two years researching a women's organization associated with the Hindu right-wing movement Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) called Rashtra Sevika Samiti, or simply Samiti (2007). In her study, she found that conditioning women as symbols of nationalist struggles is embodied in the right-wing Hindu movements in India which conflate women's personal self-defence with national self-defence in ways that transform these women into symbolic "border guards"...between Hindu and Muslim communities' (Sehgal, 2007: 60). Discursive strategies by political entrepreneurs permits for the framing of the Muslim 'Other' in terms that threatens women, and thus the nation as a whole. A paradoxical positioning ensues whereby women, in order to be liberated from the threat of the Muslim male, she must submit to the demands of the Hindu male, and thus the Hindu nation. While undergoing a physical training program meant to stave off sexualized violence from the Muslim other in the public sphere, their attention is shifted away from violence in the private sphere such as patriarchy in Hindu families and subjugation from higher castes (ibid.: 61).

Hindu nationalist violence takes the form of pogroms or riots whereby not only Muslim men and property are targeted for destruction, but Muslim women become targets of sexualized violence, as violations of the female in Muslim communities is generally perceived as a symbolic violation of the whole community, as Seghal asserts (2007: 66). Women Hindu nationalists such as members of Samiti also participate in anti-Muslim

violence. Sometimes it is in the form of property destruction, prevention of aid to victims, or the clearing of blood spilled by Hindu men. But women are not only to be dependent upon a masculinized Hindu man for protection of their virtues against intrusive communities. They also undergo militarized self-defence training in order to 'regain' their position in Vedic society as powerful mothers able to defend themselves against outside perpetration.

'The threat of rape and sexual violence is the core motivation mobilized in the construction and activation of a feminized siege mentality. Attendant with physical fear and intense emotions of shame and horror at being raped in an upper-caste, Hindu patriarchal culture that blames women for being raped in the first place' (Sehgal, 2007: 69).

In the context of the Indian upper-caste family, a woman is constantly told how to present herself in a manner which will avert a sexual male gaze, especially from lower-caste or Muslim men. In this manner, failure to present oneself in a non-sexualized manner underpins a societal acceptance that a violation of a woman's body is the women's own fault. It is a powerful tool, indeed, to establish conflicting discourse whereby the violation of women's bodies becomes the violation of the community as a whole; yet, the violation of a woman is her own fault. In this argument, women are meant to be protected by men, but simultaneously told they must protect themselves from other men. Women's empowerment can never be accomplished if men are hailed for protecting women who have not been violated, but women are to blame when they are violated. The narratives surrounding ideals of virtue are abundant in Islamic traditions as well as omnipresent in secular, overarching notions of virtue arising from cultural conceptions in South Asia such as purdah. This purdah draws a curtain between men and women and defines what a woman may do in public life. Even in diaspora populations, some forms of seclusion from other sexes may be observed and this further complicates the Kashmiri women's resistance. Women must struggle not only with their roles as leaders and civic activists, but also their roles vis-à-vis Kashmiri men, both at home and abroad.

Patriarchy and Occupation

An academic speaker at the SOAS KSM event 'Kashmir Women's Resistance,' Mir Fatimah Kanth, reflected upon the role of occupation as gendering both women and men. She claimed that state violence is patriarchal and that it 'asserts certain masculinity as

Hindu fundamentalists [that] predates the Hindu nationalist government. Women are seen as *our* women and *their* women can be raped.’ She further purported that these patriarchal notions about violence which lead to the dishonouring and humiliation of women is made possible in the context of occupation. The acknowledgement of women as bearing the brunt of violence in conflict is omnipresent in literature on conflict and human rights. But the link made between academics and activists occur through acknowledging the connection between occupation and violence against women, as the military occupation provides the structure for the application of systematic violence. This idea has been reinforced by other speakers at this event and separately one year previously at an event in Edinburgh that was collaborated with the University of Edinburgh’s Feminist Society (FemSoc). The speaker for FemSoc similarly linked the experience of occupation with the prevalence of violence against women in the Palestinian context. During that event, a Kashmiri activist was Skyped in who reinforced that the occurrence of systematic violence against women was indisputably caused by the military occupation of Kashmir by Indian security forces. Like the separate event in London a year later with a completely different set of speakers, Azra’s argument also disputed the validity of hegemonic opinion on the Kashmir conflict as ‘reductionist.’ She claims that ‘sexual, institutionalized violence is a response of notions of power and dominance against Kashmiris’ resistance.’ She further identifies a problem with the notion of justice in Kashmir:

‘the occupied state relies on an Indian judiciary which is not providing justice, ensuing in never-ending legal battles...the justice categorical portrayal of problems in Kashmir is a reductionist evaluation of Kashmir. This reduction leads to Kashmir being categorized as either a Law and Order problem or a Human rights problem – but it extends beyond these notions. The bedrock of Kashmiri resistance is azadi or freedom.’

Those listening to the talks who may have had trouble converting to supporting freedom for Palestine and/or Kashmir were now exposed to evidence that only through freedom could violence against women be ended, and this was framed in an academic perspective linked to activism. In this sense, the academic discussion of militarization having a negative impact on the lives of women became discursive narrative whereby violence against women is caused by India, the occupying force. Of course, this line of reasoning works best in the absence of militancy that was more dominant in the 1990s and early

2000s. Where civilian casualties and violence against women could be blamed on multiple sources – some non-Indian militants – this line of reasoning falls short. The occupation by India of Kashmir extends to the occupation of women when women appear to subject to a patriarchal society.

A young woman whose family is from Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK), but has lived in the UK most of her life and regularly attended KSM Edinburgh meetings, 'Salena' had quite a bit to say regarding women. Although she claimed that torture and rape were indeed a problem to be addressed in Kashmir, she emphasised more general concerns about how women were being treated in their day-to-day lives. 'I really strong think women's [situation] in Kashmir – but I suppose...in PAK in certain districts...has deteriorated...I haven't seen women's improvements, like basic medical requirements that Pakistani women get.' In her observations from visits to Pakistan and Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) or 'Azad Kashmir,' she finds discrepancies in government services. She also claims that 'there's no improvements in the infrastructure' in PAK and that 'less women and girls are getting educated.' She admits this is a problem all over South Asia, but finds that 'on the Indian side, women's education seems to be so much better,' and furthermore, women on the Indian side are 'more informed about world affairs.' These infrastructural problems seem to be linked in general to a patriarchal society. Perhaps continuing on these thoughts, when I asked Salena, 'What does azadi mean to you,' she replied:

'To me, it means, because I look at it from a woman's perspective and women's needs to be addressed – not only freedom from torture and rape, but freedom from patriarchal norms. Women that are abused feel the double sides of the administration. They feel it from the cultural impact of society like misogynistic views of society and the way they view women – freedom from not only torture but freedom from these notions.'

Salena reported that in her view, the occupation and the patriarchal society affects the other:

'The occupation affects the internal part, take for example a woman is raped by a military or army guy - rape in general has a stigma but because it's in a culture where patriarchal views are ingrained...she's raped not only by soldiers but the stigma is double abuse that she has to put up with.'

Much like the paradox of Hindu nationalist women in Seghal's book (2007), women in Kashmir face stigmatization when she is abused by the immediate perpetrators (the army

guy), but also by her compatriots. It appears to be an increasingly accepted feminist prognosis that violence against women in South Asia is linked not only to a military occupation, but is linked to parochial notions which deny a women agency as a victim and then restores her agency in an effort to attribute blame for her not being virtuous. In a retweet by KSM SOAS, it is suggested that shaming women is a part of Indian state policy. Kashmir right's activist, Khurram Parvez, is quoted in this example which is poignant to the discussion surrounding treatment of women under occupation, but also in society in general. He begins by claiming,

'They question the character of the women who were killed and raped. In Kashmir the character of the victim is always discussed by our oppressors as if it is legal for them to rape a women is she's a prostitute, as if it is legal for them, if a women is involved in some promiscuity, to molest, or kill them...'

He continues to discuss how this line of thinking is sanctioned by an institution which protects perpetrators.

At the KSM SOAS event in February 2016 on women's resistance, the issue of reporting rape and other violations is particularly challenging for women in the context of occupation. One of the speakers asks the question, 'how do you report rape to the authorities that permit it?' Furthermore, when rape is reported or if there is an attempt to seek justice, there is an accusation, the speaker argues, that the women alleging rape are 'wives of terrorists,' which she purports is a 'damning statement linked to orders of state authority.' This is particularly vexing since the 'wife of a terrorist' places the blame on the women - whether it is true or not – as an associate of an enemy other.

Discussions surround whether or not a woman is being virtuous when she is victimized is often heated debate when there is a post, for example, of a woman yelling at an Indian soldier or of college girls throwing stones. These sorts of remarks tend to be absent from commentary among the transient students and their respective social media sites. The questions are only recently raised by some activists and academic-activists working on gender and development in Kashmir rather recently. Kashmiri Muslim women have not been the only victimized women in Kashmir. However, again, this is another topic that is left out of discussions. Kashmiri Pandit women as well have been framed as victims of insurgency. Although there is little in the way of empirical observation, it was noted at one KSM SOAS event that during the 1990s when Pandits felt forced from their

homes in the Valley, mosques were 'blaring out threats they will take our women.' In Ankur Datta's (2011) research on Pandit refugees, there is indeed evidence that mosques were advertising killing Pandit men and kidnapping Pandit women. Most of my respondents would have been too young to recall vividly these calls if they were widespread outside of specific areas, and Pandit women were not brought up outside of this event.

Women in Kashmir are victimized in many ways, sometimes through physical assault and other times via misogynistic commentary. Women are also victims of the silence surrounding discussions of the role of patriarchy or the lack of freedom women in Kashmir may have. It is often perceived as a lack of freedom which is equivocal to the lack of freedom of the nation of Kashmir, however, it extends beyond to the lack of freedom or agency a woman has over her body, her dress, and actions.

Rape as a Weapon of War

Sexual violence as a result of conflict is not just a means to degrade another human, but is a means to degrade a human because of their ethnic or national identity, and thus becomes a systematic strategy intended to 'not only harm and dominate individuals, but also their communities' (Anjum, 2018: 48). Sexual violence in conflict situations is not just a matter of excess but can be considered a crime against humanity when it is systematic and intended to persecute a particular ethnic group. Violated women and girls in Kashmir often become a symbol of violence, Indian oppression, and subsequently a symbol of the freedom movement. Kunan Poshpura is probably the leading example of this. It is perhaps the most consistently raised issue and grievance, even though it occurred some years ago in February of 1991. Now, every year in February a slew of social media posts and discussions regarding sexual assault in Kashmir activates freedom activists to protest and write posts stating their solidarity with women in Kashmir to commemorate Kashmiri women's resistance day on 23 February. KSM groups emphasise the anniversary by holding meetings and events which draw attention to women's rights violations and recap eyewitness accounts of the night's traumatic events. Nearly every incident of violence in Kashmir, including the soaring rate of eye injuries due to the wide use of pellet guns in the summer of 2016 had led to reflections on other injustices such

as Kunan Poshpura. Collective memories of violence are incomplete without reflections upon this tragedy.

The wording of the initial advertisement for KSM Edinburgh's vigil on 5 February outside the Indian consulate was rather demonstrative of one of the most prominent ways the Kashmir freedom movement would be framed. In the small business-card slip of paper, the vigil aimed to protest '63 years of occupation by India and [sic] its human rights abuses...torture of Kashmiris, and rape being used as a weapon of war against women.' Rape as a weapon of war is one of those phrases that is widely used in academia, activism, and used among United Nations organizations.¹² The terminology has gained particular prominence to describe genocidal rape by perpetrators in Bosnia – especially against Muslim women.¹³ The analogy is not lost with the perpetration of predominately Hindu Indian security personnel as the purported perpetrators of rape as a weapon of war against predominately Muslim Kashmiri women. As described earlier, there is a clear link between gender and nation whereby Kashmiri female bodies are representative of the violated Kashmiri, and thus, their right to self-determination. It is not uncommon for activists to describe the situation in Kashmir as 'genocidal,' as prolific writer Mirza Waheed dubbed the Indian occupation in Kashmir during a public discussion at KSM SOAS whose main theme was that peace in South Asia could only be achieved if the Kashmir dispute was resolved.

One of the narratives that recurs is the witnessing of tragedy and how it impacts someone. Muzzamil, an activist who spoke at several KSM SOAS events recounted the story of a young girl he encountered in an orphanage.

12 Rape being framed as a weapon of war has occurred primarily in response to the high accounts of rape that happened during the conflicts that erupted after the breakup of Yugoslavia. In order to prosecute mass rape in the International Tribunal, rape needed to be considered a 'crime against humanity' or a tactic used as part of armed conflict. (see Buss, D. (2009) 'Rethinking Rape as a Weapon of War.' *Feminist Legal Studies*, 17 (2) Aug., pp. 145-163 *SpringerLink* and Stigmayer (1995) *Mass Rape: the War Against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina*)

13 'Genocidal rape' was a term that gained more popular usage in attempts to bring those accountable for mass rape and sexual slavery that occurred during the Serbia and Bosnian conflicts. The victims were mostly Muslim women (although a large number of Croatian women suffered similar fates). The argument concluding the rape constituted genocide was because not only were Muslim men and boys targeted in an ethnic cleansing campaign, but Muslim women were detained and raped regularly in order to force impregnation, thus breeding out the Bosnian Muslims. (see Engle (2015) 'Feminism and its (Dis)contents: Criminalizing Wartime Rape in Bosnia and Herzegovina.' *The American Journal of International Law*, 99 (4) Oct., pp. 778-816

She was six years old when the army came in and they murdered her family and they gang raped her mother, her sister...and her grandmother who I think at the time, I remember was eighty years old. She was hiding and she witnessed these things. She witnessed them all. She was living in an orphanage because her grandmother...didn't have the money so she lived in an orphanage. So, I used to come and go occasionally and I saw her. It was always that one kid. You know in the movies how there's always that one kid...just wouldn't play, wouldn't talk, wouldn't do anything. So I asked the lady, the manager what's her story...So they explained. It was one of the worst things I've ever heard.

He did not delve deeply into the circumstances or the outcomes of the rapes. However, this description serves to remind the audience of the vulnerability of women of all ages and the scars they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Again, the perpetrators are quite clear: the army is to blame. It is suggestive that without the presence of the army, these things would not happen. They are out to attack Kashmiris and particularly, to take advantage of Kashmiri women. The Indian soldier as a perpetrator and the Kashmiri as the victim is often the dichotomy as framed in these discussions. It is, of course, more nuanced than this. This does, however, lead to one of the ways in which Kashmiri freedom activists speak about their movement. Through witnessing and accounting for atrocities, Kashmiris are utilizing the victimization frame, which can help outsider activists empathize with their movement. However, being a victim is a vulnerable state, which most activists would find uncomfortable. After claiming victimhood, it is then necessary for survivors and witnesses to embrace resistance in order to reclaim agency.

Women's Resistance to Occupation

Goldie Osuri of the University of Warwick is a regular voice at academically-affiliated Kashmir events. In her article 'Sovereignty, Postcoloniality, and Gendering Human Rights: Rape and Occupation' (2015), it is easy to explore further the arguments presented at events regarding the logic that violence against women in Kashmir is intrinsically linked to the occupation and the heavy presence of the military in Kashmir. Osuri recognizes the promptness of retaliation against the perpetrators in the infamous Delhi rape case of December 2012, and subsequent amendments to embolden laws on rape in India. However, these laws, she argues are still patriarchal in nature and dismisses rape of a woman by her husband, penetration of a man by another man, and

upholds protections for security personnel posted in Kashmir and India's Northeast where accusations of rape by military forces are widespread.

Whether in the domestic or the public spheres, women's bodies have been objectified. In one narrative, women are caught between the domestic and the public perpetrator. Papori Bora (2010) refers to this in an article analysing the violation of women in the Northeast and subsequent protests and leading to a change in feminist discourse which began to reference women's rights in the Northeast as human rights. Bora (2010) refers to a 2005 report by the Northeast Network, *Women in Armed Conflict Situations*, which is no longer available online but is quoted as:

'Women experience greater violations being caught between different violators and in view of the fact that in such situations, patriarchal values are strongly reinforced. On the one hand, the state targets women and uses violence against them as a means of suppression and on the other the community is apathetic to the special problems faced by women' (349).

Bora (2010) asserts that the report argues 'for recognizing *women's right as human rights* within the armed conflicts in the Northeast...' aligning itself to a 'growing movement within the transnational human rights discourse' (2010: 349). The discourse adapted by a local population struggling with autonomy from the Indian state echoes calls from Kashmir, and the struggle between patriarchy and occupation. Osuri (2015) interprets this segment of the 2005 report as framing women as 'passive objects caught between the state and the community...' and addressing 'the category of gender in a unidimensional context of state violence in the Northeast' (5). The way violence against women is framed can lend to the notion that violence against women is a condition of a backward, 'tribal' community who wishes to secede from India. In this manner, laws such as Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which implies immunity to uniformed perpetrators of violence in Kashmir and the Northeast are seen in the colonial and postcolonial context – as a consequence of the Quit India movement vis-à-vis British colonialism and uprisings in the borderlands such as the 'Quit Kashmir' movement vis-à-vis Indian colonialism.

Osuri (2015) and Bora (2010) discuss some of the problems surrounding the current discourse on violence towards women, particularly with regards to their objectification. They are objects of an 'Other' male community, objects of a patriarchal



Figure 3:1 Protest Against Rape, Assam, July 2004

community, objects of other people's wars and battles for self-determination. In July 2004, after a woman arrested by Assam Rifles for suspected militancy was brutally tortured, raped, and her body was dumped near her home, a protest was formed whereby women would reclaim themselves as

subjects. Around 100 women in Manipur came out in response to protest, shouting slogans at Kangla Fort in Imphal which dared the Indian army to come out and rape the women in a public place (Hussain, 2004). Hussain's article was widely circulated on social media, and the event has been referenced during at least one KSM SOAS event on women resistance. Osuri, who happened to be present at that event wrote previously that the reason behind the wording, 'Indian Army Rape *Us*,' rather than 'Indian Army Rapes Women,' is an effort to reclaim women as the subject rather than as an object (2015: 7). Again, with reference to Bora (2010), it is also argued that 'Us' can also be interpreted with reference to the human rights argument surrounding AFSPA which was hotly contested during this time. Further the 'us' is meant to be not just 'us women' but meant to apply to the Northeast in general. The show of women in solidarity also has the capacity to extend to Kashmir. At the same KSM event, a young Indian woman proposed that regions affected by violence against women can stand in solidarity with one another in a united effort to thwart violence by Indian soldiers in all peripheral regions of India.

Although the protest tactics have been quite different, incidences of brutal events in Kashmir such as the mass rape case of a small village in IAK, Kunan Poshpura, in

1991 have led to a similar development. First, there is a demand for perpetrators to be punished and there is protest against legal impunity such as AFSPA implies for military personnel. As the Kunan Poshpura incident occurred during the height of the insurgency, it was probably exploited by jihadists, extremists, and secular freedom activists alike to recruit those to their cause, saving ‘their’ women; but, also saving their Kashmir from Indian occupation. The logic of violence against women being a circumstance of an occupation of a perceived colonial entity whose perpetrators enjoy legal impunity is further explored later with evidence drawn from events and discussions with activists. What is important to note in the case of women in the Northeast reclaiming their bodies as subjects rather than objects is an element explored now with reference to the roles of women in violent conflict in Kashmir, how it relates to the current struggles, and how it helps or hinders female actors in Kashmir reclaim agency – or their own self-determination.

Like Malik’s (2019) review of Kashmir women’s resistance over the many decades since partition and prior to partition, Mir Fatima Kanth (2018) also connects contemporary resistance by women in Kashmir to historical precedence. Kanth (2018) remarks how a protest led by college women in the 1970s was brushed off as a laughing matter and the protest by college women in 2017 throwing stones and demanding azadi was similarly met with ‘surprise, disapproval, and resentment’ (42). This response, she argues, effectively challenges the political agency that women have been expressing as though it was a wholly new development. Kanth (2018) asserts that women protesters during this time were seen as a spectacle and were framed in the Indian media as the radicalization of young women, whereas the local media framed the protests as ‘Kashmiri women “redefining” political agency’ (43). In either case, there is little attention to the fact that women were visible in the massive demonstrations of 2008 and 2010, or before this during the periods of insurgency when women demonstrated to demand justice for missing loved ones. Kanth (2018) asserts that ‘acts of everyday...dissent articulated by Kashmiri women through the 1990s became invisible when juxtaposed with spectacles of “stone pelting” street protests...by a “new generation” of young women’ (44). Women in Kashmir have been active, not passive, participants of resistance to occupation. This is a thread continued in the next sections of this chapter in the context of the contemporary struggle.

Kashmir's Contemporary Freedom Struggle

In much the way that *Kashmir's Trails of Torture* (2012) brought to life the human rights situation in Kashmir for an outside audience, Iffat Fatima's *Blood Leaves Its Trail* (2015) brought to Indian and international audiences a real sense of the Kashmiri struggle from a perspective of families torn apart by enforced disappearances. It further stands as a documentary that attests to people of Kashmir's resilience and especially to the role of women's resistance in Kashmir. The memory of loved ones who have been disappeared and the perseverance of loved ones and activists to seek justice presents Kashmiris as not just victims but as actors that have a voice in fighting oppression. The fight for justice is an act of defiance and a way to reclaim agency. This is a theme further explored in critical documentaries and art, including graffiti art, prose, and song lyrics.

Women's resistance in the Contemporary Azadi Movement

It is a challenging balancing act negotiating between patriarchy and freedom from occupation, as tradition continues to factor into the contemporary azadi movement. The concept of honour and dignity are important attributes in Kashmir's freedom movement, and in the narrative of female dissent. Van der Molen and Bal (2011) claim that the resistance movement, in the context of 'widespread societal anxiety about 'dishonour,' young Kashmiris' urge to reclaim dignity at once motivates them to practice dissent and narrows the scope for female dissidents' capacity to act upon this drive overtly' (93). Again, this paradox arises in the series of nonviolent protests and the evolution of a 'separatist' struggle into a transnational social movement. Young people in particular are taking the opportunity to diffuse protest tactics from other transnational movements, adapting, and integrating them into a movement that is quite their own. But in this context, female dissidents are often perceived to have very different roles than their male counterparts – at least *in* Kashmir. Van der Molen and Bal, through an ethnographic study of youth mobilization in Kashmir, uncover a sort of division of labour between the genders when it comes to acts of resistance. Young women, according to the van der Molen and Bal's interlocutors are more likely to engage in 'small, small acts' of resistance which

contribute to the cause of justice such as writing poetry. These small acts of resistance are regarded with less importance than 'active resistance' as seen by young men that accordingly fill previous literature on Kashmir's azadi movement. Going beyond these nuances, the authors cite the omnipresence of military and paramilitary troops, police and intelligence operative as greatly constraining the way young people are able to dissent (ibid.: 94). Women in particular may be reluctant to draw attention to themselves for fear of arrest and molestation. Given the documentation of sexual assault on women in Kashmir and the reticence to investigate these crimes, as Van der Molen and Bal (2011) argue, may be an even bigger reason for women's limited roles in overt resistance than stigma from a patriarchal culture. When men are beaten and detained, they earn respect as a sort of right of passage. When women are detained, however, there is always the fear of sexual assault, which would bring dishonour. Although sexual assault of men and boys has occurred, it is assumed to occur much less often, or at least it is reported at a significantly lower rate. Women protest within Kashmir may not always be visible, but the respondents in van der Molen and Bal's study claim that every act that they do, whether sitting in a class or writing poetry or articles, is to be an act of dignity. Reclaiming dignity or agency through small acts of resistance does, I would argue, lead to more visible acts of resistance where the opportunity exists.

Today, female azadi activists are front and centre in advocating for rights for Kashmiris as well as rights for women in general. They are indispensable and, in my experience, have been the face of the movement abroad. They are posting, blogging, organizing, and staging small and large incidences of resistance against the perceived occupation of their homeland. They are also becoming more visible in the contemporary azadi movement. Since 2010, women have been the stars of photojournalism. Kaul accounts how even middle aged 'took to the streets in protest, part of the tens of thousands of Kashmiris who defied curfews...' (2011: 195). A cross-section of society is protesting, from various classes, young and old, women and men. This is sadly in response to the large percentage of the population that has witnessed violence in Kashmir. Women, like men are determined to articulate their grievances against an Indian state which is perceived as being uncaring and security forces which are responsible for murdering civilians (ibid: 195-6). There is a lot more literature coming out from journalists, academics, and advocates alike regarding the contemporary resistance movement,

which locate women as a much stronger and more autonomous force than in earlier literature. A recent article (2017) which was distributed on social media, 'Not submissive, but combative: Kashmir's superwomen,' aptly defines the move for Kashmir's female resisters to claim more visibility in the valley itself. The article, found late in the writing up of this thesis, also explores the role of women in militancy and in 'protecting' Kashmir from tribal invasion in the wake of Partition. After the historical review, it then continues by asserting the role of women in contemporary protests in Kashmir. Breaking out fairly recently, the acknowledgement of the role women have had on the contemporary and historical azadi movements are becoming more mainstream. The debates are also becoming more nuanced. A hotly debated picture of girls throwing stones at security forces with one girl having 'a basketball in one hand and a stone in the other,' has made it's rounds on social media with mixed feedback of patronizing and supportive commentary. The article's author claims that women have always been at the forefront of the azadi movement, but that these days it is being more widely reported (Gazi: 2017). Ather Zia heads her article 'Resistance is a way of life for Kashmir's youth' (2017) with the image of the young women protesting. Writing in April, 2017, Zia asserts that this is the first time that students in Kashmir have demonstrated in such a collective manner. The cause of the swell in protests, Zia claims, was a solidarity response to force used against students in Pulwama. As women of the 1950s and 1960s took to the streets in protest, so are the women of today. Women also suffer as directly or indirectly being part of the resistance against Indian forces. Zia (2017) describes a fourteen-year old girl who was blinded after being near a protest (but not a part of it) when sprayed with a pellet gun at close range. Faisal Khan (2017), also focusing on women's resistance in the college protests, displays photos of young women and girls throwing stones, shouting slogans, and kicking a truck of a security force officer. Also reported is a girl in the hospital with a fractured skull and a woman lying on the ground after being exposed to tear gas (Khan, 2017). Although this was a particularly active period in resistance, it demonstrates how crucial women's involvement in the resistance is.

I would argue that this is due to the increase in international awareness and the broadening of the framing of the azadi movement in terms of women and human rights, and to the extension of the framing of the movement to outsiders. Authors such as Inshah Malik (2019) are reclaiming women's roles throughout the Kashmir movement, making

them more visible historically as well as today. This is done in part by casting away the impression of the freedom movement as a movement for the freedom of the Kashmiri man alone. It is not the Kashmiri man speaking on behalf of the Kashmiri woman that reaches across transnational divides, but the Kashmiri woman who speaks for herself that draws international attention to her own rights. This is assisted through the lens of the academic speaker at KSM, the photojournalist in IAK, and via documentary films which raise awareness of the resistance of Kashmiri women.

Women are more visible in the azadi movement today for several reasons. First, as the review of literature and history of the role of women in Kashmir have shown, women have always played a significant role in the azadi movement. Second, the evolution of the azadi movement from one a domestic to a transnational social movement has provided the space for women to have more significant roles in the freedom movement. Third, women have seized opportunities in Kashmir and abroad in professions which permit for them to work with international NGOs and transnational organizations allowing for a more dominant voice in contemporary framings of the movement, e.g. a human rights movement, women's rights, etc. Finally, the connection and ability to travel abroad and communicate on social media has provided the opportunity to openly and visibly dissent without threats to their dignity or person; and, without the direct supervision or guidance of a male superior. Thus, women are taking up leadership positions and organizing societies such as the KSM. Both Edinburgh and SOAS sites have been organized and have been led by women. One of the former Presidents of Edinburgh KSM has been labelled the 'backbone' of the society. Female organizers from PAK and IAK have organized or participated in the organization of societies in the UK, but also inspired female leadership in Kashmir.

Many women seen protesting in public are the ones that continue to press for answers as to the whereabouts of their missing sons and husbands. Parveena Ahangar, founder of the Association of Parents for Disappeared Persons (APDP) Kashmir, has become a symbol of loss in the conflict in Kashmir as well as a symbol of hope and resistance. ADPD was founded in August 1990 in response to Ahangar's eighteen-year old son was arrested and went missing shortly thereafter under dubious circumstances (Butalia, 2002; Malik, 2019: 93). The APDP is probably the most well-known and publicized outside of Kashmir. The organization has now become a symbol of the

contemporary movement for justice and closure in Kashmir. In its beginnings, however, the APDP was more of a support network, creating space for members to help one another with legal matters such as court visits and strategizing transportation (Mailk, 2019: 94). The organization quickly expanded its milieu to include developing a database for forcibly disappeared persons, performing mourning protests, and public gatherings which occur monthly in a park (Malik, 2019: 94). All of these actions help to keep the memories of loved ones alive in lieu of permanent closure as well as raise awareness of the 'more than 8000 disappeared people in Kashmir' (ibid.). Deepti Misri (2014) further theorizes that this very public display as a way of memory-keeping is a challenge to the state's desire to see these disappearances forgotten. The 'performance' of this protest can be seen as an act of resistance against state violence which acts in impunity. The visual display of photos and grieving family members is a challenge to the authority's ability to choose what can be seen or heard.

Documentaries and imagery of women protesting and holding vigils for lost loved ones have become a staple of the resistance movement. One documentary maker, Iffat Fatima recently created the film *Blood Leaves Its Trail* (2015) which critically engages with the notion that memories are a 'mode of resistance' through 'confronting reality and morphing from the personal to the political' (filmsouthasia.org, 2015). Prior to this, she created an earlier documentary freely available on YouTube, *Where have you hidden my new moon crescent?* (2009), which follows Mughal Mase who lost her only son after he was unlawfully abducted and disappeared. The documentary follows Mase's story who recalls how she searched everywhere, filed a report, and still came up empty-handed. She met Parveena and is now active with ADPD. The documentary also gives viewers a background of the Kashmir resistance against Indian occupation with inclusive video of people protesting in large crowds, possibly from 2008 footage. Included in the footage are women shouting freedom slogans in English as well as other local languages. Mase, and women like her, are not just victims in the struggle to find their lost loved ones, but actively resist Indian occupation, albeit in a variety of ways.

Parveena, before becoming an activist was a self-described 'illiterate housewife' (Best and Hussey, 2005: 12). The disappearance of her son, however, turned her into a 'political agent and key mobilising figure in the revival of civil society political activism for peace' (ibid). The term 'illiterate housewife' was used in February 2016 at a KSM event

taking place at the new Kings College London KSM (KSM KCL). The speaker, a spoken word artist and activist also used this language to describe her not in a demeaning way but in a way to reveal the stark contrast between a non-activist and an activist. It was a way to place importance on the life before becoming politicized in some way as though coming from innocence and being transformed into a necessary fighter, in response to the wrongdoing. This is an analogy that links many Kashmiris together: the boy who was killed by a teargas cannister on his way home from school becomes a martyr; the girl who is shot by a stray bullet after passing an open window in her home becomes a rallying point for protest; the boy who was beaten by security forces becomes the face of renewed militant resistance; the woman who loses her son to an enforced disappearance becomes a world-famous activist. As soon as a Kashmiri becomes a victim, they are called to become an activist in a quest for freedom against an oppressor. This reclaims agency and restores honour. One such woman, Parveena Ahangar, together with others like her who have been missing loved ones have formed the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP). She, along with other activists such as human rights lawyer, Parvez Imroz – who appears prominently in BBC's documentary *Kashmir's Torture Trail* (2012) – routinely interview and compile the stories of those who have lost loved ones.

'Sammy' told Parveena's story to a crowd at Kings College London (KCL's) inaugural event in February 2016. Sammy claims that she is not an academic or a historian as the other speaker, but that she was speaking as a 'storyteller.' She begins by telling the audience that Parveena's son was taken from their home in 1990:

'Three Indian soldiers came and he was never returned. At the time, she was illiterate and never had anything to do outside of their own house. She went to prisons, everywhere you wouldn't want your mother to go to in order to search for her son...She never stopped and she continued to search and she learned that other families were searching for their sons, fathers, brothers and subjected to disappearances. She set up APDP in order to demand justice for those men who were taken. It wasn't taken to civilian court but to a military tribunal. One of the people said that if you stop asking for these men they will pay you money but she didn't want money just her son.'

A gradual shift from a more passive to a more active role in collective mobilisation occurred when one woman whose son was disappeared by Indian security forces worked

in collaboration with other women and human rights advocates in order to establish the APDP. The narrative of the story as told by Sammy shows how Parveena is exposed to these places where 'you wouldn't want your mother to go' in an effort to recover her son. She is transformed from an illiterate housewife to a prominent activist. The narrative of the victimized women becoming empowered through resistance is an ongoing theme through many discussions involving female activism in Kashmir.

Essar Batool, co-author of the book *Do You Remember Kunan Poshpura?* (2016), Skyped in to the 16 February 2016 event 'Women's Resistance in Kashmir.' She gave a summation of what transpired there on 23rd February 1991:

'In one of the most militarized districts in Kashmir, on the night of 23rd February, Indian forces cordoned off both villages before a crackdown – usually there is an announcement before a crackdown, but not this time. The men and women were segregated. The men were tortured the whole night in storehouses and the women were raped all night inside their own homes. The youngest was thirteen years old and the oldest eighty years of age. We don't have a consistent number because of the stigma attached to rape. Many were younger, unmarried women.'

Batool asserted that what happened in Kunan Poshpura was a symbol of impunity by the armed forces and the subsequent cover-ups after the villagers tried to seek justice and the way survivors were treated were further humiliating. They had to travel long distances to hearings, were called by name at a public hearing, and their legal representation was constantly intimidated. Activists such as Essar claimed that despite being afraid while re-investigating the case 23 years later in 2012, that is was a necessary 'act of resistance by women of Kashmir.'

One member of KSM and former journalist in Kashmir, 'Jasmin,' also spoke at the event:

'When it comes to Kashmir, [Kashmiris] are always telling personal stories – "Oh yeah that thing happened there..." but for me it's something I've seen with my own eyes. I was born in the 90s - we are [called] children of conflict. I have grown up listening to stories of resistance from my mother and my grandmother. Kashmiri women have been very brave. There are innumerable stories of resistance.'

Departing momentarily from violence, she demonstrates the resolve of Kashmiris with reference to the floods of 2014. In a recurring example of Kashmiris' strength at meetings, she noted how when the floods happened, India did not help, nor did India permit external organizations to help. 'Some areas were badly occupied under water, women used to

cook for hundreds and thousands, and did work side-by-side with men.’ Returning to violence, she cites her mother’s resolve when she was a little girl:

‘When I was two years old I went to get some vaccinations [with my mother’ and there was some [bomb] blast and she just kept running and running with me in her arms to take shelter in a farmers’ field. She managed to keep me safe and brought me back home in a milk truck... When I was just four years old - when there was a siege in my home - we left. I remember asking if I could take toys and she (my mother) said ‘Don’t worry, we are coming back!’ She never allowed that fear to grow inside me. Kashmiri woman played a very crucial role...While men went out to [fight] women also carried arms and ammunition and would cook food and nurse the militants. Nothing could break their courage.’

Women, whether half-widows, mothers protecting their children, or arms smuggler – are viewed with great reverence in Kashmir. One of the committee members, Nabila, claims the rise of prominence of women in the Kashmir conflict is in part due to the generation, as Jasmin and other respondents have referenced it – ‘children of conflict.’ The experience of growing up surrounded by conflict and having women often taking up more roles related to resistance has perhaps extended the role women have in the contemporary Kashmir freedom movement.

Reclaiming Agency

The reclamation of agency of women whose bodies have been violated and the reclamation of agency by the nation that has been violated go hand-in-hand metaphorically. When injustices go without conclusion for so long such as the mass raping of a small village in IAK, Kunan Poshpura, the Kashmiri nation itself is not permitted to heal. Unlike merely re-hashing the narrative ‘If we men can protect our women, then we are a strong nation,’ the disappearances of men and the rise of women to fill a vacuum of power encapsulated an emergent narrative: ‘Our nation is strong when our women are strong.’ This is particularly poignant when placed in the context of human rights narratives which have been diffused from other movements, but with the specificities of the Kashmir freedom movement. On the one hand, the narrative of framing techniques of the contemporary transnational women’s rights movements has permitted for the emerging activists to adopt this frame in discourse in order to branch out to a wider audience. On the other hand, the contextualization of the dominance of women in political power and as leaders in the transnational freedom movement permits for the diffusion of

such a frame or narrative to have the powerful potential to re-frame the struggle of the man in regaining honour by reclaiming the nation to incorporate the importance of and blurring the roles of men and women in the Kashmir freedom movement. This rather progressive turn from a male-dominated insurgency of the 1990s whereby women were passive bystanders in a war to a freedom movement whereby women take active stances itself plays to a more universal framing of human rights that an international audience is more likely to have sympathy. Further, and perhaps one of the most important contributions of reaching out to academic and activist communities is presenting the human rights violations as a direct consequence of India as an occupying nation presents a clear and for many logical path to support Kashmir's independence movement. In the absence of external militant forces from Pakistan, the alleged perpetrators become clearer as Indian security forces can be permitted to take the blame. The only solution, or prognosis is complete independence of Kashmir.

The dominance of female leadership in the KSM and the prominence of outspoken women and progressive youths today could be seen as resembling earlier women's movements in the state. The historical memory of women taking up arms to defend democracy is relived today in depictions of women resisting and in the titles of KSM events. There is still a romantic heroism of the Kashmiri woman defending her domicile with a gun in hand. Figure 4 is a 9 March 2016 post on the University of Birmingham version of KSM, the 'Kashmir Awareness Society' Facebook page. The post



In 2009, then 18-year-old Rukhsana Kausar saw her parents being beaten as part of a forced marriage proposal by a militia commander in Kashmir. So, she killed one militant with an axe, gunned down the commander and started a 4-hour gun battle with the rest of the militia. She won.

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Figure 3:2 Young woman holding rifle, Facebook post, 2016

shows a young Pahari woman wielding an assault rifle and is accompanied by the caption 'A bit late but Happy International Women's Day!' Pride in the ability of Kashmiri women to defend her homeland continues and is perhaps even more pertinent today than it was when the WSDC was distributing pamphlets of women armed with rifles. Also interesting to note in figure 3:2 is that the caption describes the woman and her family

being threatened by militants. Specifically, the woman is protecting her family and her virtue by avoiding a 'forced marriage proposal by a militia commander.' This young Kashmiri woman becomes an ideal image of what a woman should be in the resistance movement. She is empowered as well as virtuous. Stemming from Misra's recollections and Whitehead's research on the earlier roles of women in Kashmir, women have continued the tradition of defending the Kashmiri people and reclaiming their own agency as actors in their own battles.

Women's rights in general and women's empowerment were side topics in a few conversations with respondents. One woman who had married into a Kashmiri family, but is not herself from South Asia, discussed with her husband how they were involved in a women's project for 'women's empowerment in Kashmir.' The project was described as a small social enterprise where women would design and develop projects that would be brought to the UK.

Concern for the welfare of women and their empowerment in general were mixed. Many of the KSM activists indeed seemed to be aware of some pertinent feminist topics. It was rather interpreted differently. For some, gendered interpretations of the Kashmiri freedom movement did not extend beyond grievances over violations that have happened to women and the desire to end them. For others, there was an inextricable link between violence against women and the militarized occupation of Kashmir. And yet, for others gender empowerment was something that needed to happen within Kashmir society, regardless of its territorial sovereignty.

Not your parents' social movement: Progressive Youth Culture

The KSM can be seen as representative of a youthful, progressive contemporary movement. It is largely distinguishable from the JKLF, whose members tend to be older and male. KSM, on the other hand, thrives on female leadership and is guided by youths. Even where older, more experienced activists lend their expertise, they tend to give the floor to their younger, Kashmiri counterparts. One of my respondents, a second-generation Kashmiri, claimed that she felt out of place when politics was being discussed by her father and her uncle. The JKLF was referred to as 'outdated' by a KSM SOAS

member, and when referenced during a KSM Scotland meeting, the head of JKLF, Yasin Malik, was met with ambivalence. The younger generation of Kashmiri activists clearly try to separate themselves from previous incarnations of the azadi movement. KSM and the contemporary freedom movement was more representative of the new generation of Kashmiris – the transient, international, contemporary, the tweeters, and arguably the ‘hipsters’.¹⁴ Youths seem to clearly distinguish ‘politics’ from whatever it is they are doing. One activist, Rubina, who claims that her being Kashmiri had a huge impact on organizing KSM in London also claimed she was not a ‘politician’ or ‘associated with any politics.’ ‘We’re just normal people,’ she asserted, “just doing small awareness raising about unemployment, corruption, development, terrorism, everything is an issue.’ They are apathetic towards the political establishment in the UK and India, including the elected leaders in Jammu and Kashmir. For many young Kashmiri activists, politics is associated with being part of the corruption Rabina complains about.

Despite letter-writing and postcard campaigns to MPs and MSPs (Scotland) and the UN, there was little direct involvement in governmental affairs. Many of the respondents were not affiliated with a political party. There were, however, two respondents from Pakistan who claimed to have previously been involved in the political party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Further, Imran Khan, the former chairman of the PTI and now Prime Minister of Pakistan, has been praised on numerous occasions during KSM meetings at the Edinburgh site. One member of KSM SOAS, who came from IAK did claim to support the party but did not specify to what extent they were involved. Another member, born in the UK, claimed to be a Labour party supporter. What was perhaps most interesting wasn’t just the lack of clear identification with a political party, but the explicit denial of political involvement, despite active engagement in KSM. Several KSM respondents claimed to be ‘apolitical,’ instead viewing their involvement in KSM to be a sort of post-political involvement. Human rights, in their perspective, was beyond polemical debate.

Traditional identity markers are rejected or avoided by some activists. Some of the respondents for this study explicitly requested not referencing their religion; a couple

¹⁴ ‘Hipsters’ is a term used by a writer for the independent news source *Kashmir Walla* depicting those who refused to attend a demonstration for Kashmir organized by a prominent politician from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Ahmed, 2014).

of people affiliated with KSM had no religion. Others saw absolutely no correlation between their religious affiliations and their support for the freedom movement. One respondent claimed his spiritual beliefs made him much less likely to be politically active. Despite the practice bringing about some dissent, religious institutions have, for the most part, been a source of organization, recruitment, and/or educating in a safe space, which certainly impacted the numbers of participants through collaboration efforts with Isoc. Collaborative events and meetings have taken place with many other societies, however, and plays a role in extending the scope of the movement to be, perhaps, more focused universal conceptions of human rights, freedom of speech and movement, etc.

Perhaps the shift is reliance on an organized political movement to a 'new' grassroots movement is best depicted by the ambivalent attitude many younger members of Kashmir's freedom movement have towards the JKLF. The JKLF seems to have lost some relevance, at least for the younger generation of Kashmiri activists in the UK. This was depicted in a microcosm from observations at the November 2015 anti-Modi protest. I attended the event with a couple of young women and only one male from KSM SOAS, although there was representation of a mixed-gender attendance by some other SOAS students who may have been affiliated with other groups at the event. The lack of female representation of the JKLF and the group for which they stood by at the protest (supporting the rights of Sikhs), was stark in contrast to the usual composition of the KSM events. Although fliers were passed between representatives of KSM, JKLF and other nominated constituents, fruitful discussion or networking between groups was overshadowed by incessant selfie-taking of the gathered crowd. The protest itself was less cohesive of a unified front as was observed at the KSM Edinburgh vigil described previously, than it seemed to be more of a parade whereby there were separate contingents of partially-organized groups who varied on a spectrum of liking each other a lot to wanting to be as far away from one another as possible. There was a simultaneous confliction of individual groups as causes fighting with one another for publicity as well as the sense that there is a possibility of unity in such diversity faced with a common enemy. One notable observation at the protest was seeing how the political contingents generally kept to their groups. Meanwhile, the younger KSM members went from group to group, passing out fliers, waving anti-Modi placards hand-written in colourful letters and mingling with one another much as you would see at a more informal gathering.

The KSM distinguishes itself from the older generation of organized parties not through the exclusion, but through the inclusion of representatives of the JKLF and others at their events. The JKLF speaker at a KSM event in London was a male who read from a prepared script which was later sent out in an email newsletter from the organization. It was a carefully prepared script for the events held in Kashmir solidarity week of February 2016, 'Jammu and Kashmir: Conflicting Perspectives.' The other panellists were University of Westminster academic Dibyesh Anand, Kashmir activist and advocate, Muzzamil Thakur, and a medical doctor whose arguments drew attention to the displaced Kashmir Pandit community. The diversity of the panellists represents the diversity of opinions and how the Kashmir issue has been framed from its pre-Partition grievances through to the present-day protest mobilization in IAK. Another event panellist included academic Andrew Whitehead, author of *Mission in Kashmir* (2007), speaking along with a Kashmir activist and spoken word artist. This is of course indicative rather than exhaustive, but it reveals a new direction of Kashmir freedom activists from older generations. There is inclusion of various ideas and dialogue and a greater presence of women, whose roles in the Kashmir freedom movement have been rather marginalized previously.

Regardless of political party affiliations, all respondents seem to highlight that human rights were a universal ideal and rose above political affiliations and the proposed territorial resolutions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. This undercurrent was perhaps best articulated when someone who spoke at a couple KSM events was discussing the Kunan Poshpura tragedy in Kashmir at an event titled 'Jammu and Kashmir: Conflicting Perspectives':

'An entire village of women were raped, while the men were hung or tied and made to watch. And then burned...alive. That's the reality of Kashmir. So when we hear about India and Pakistan, I don't give a *shit*...of what their conflicting perspectives are. I don't care what their economic policies are. I don't care about the political situation. I don't care about who they wanted to trade with...' (18 Feb 2016)

There is express disillusionment with political processes in and regarding to Kashmir. There is historical precedence for the disillusionment. Election rigging and the dismissal of elected officials in the state have been well-documented affairs (Akbar, 1985; Schofield, 2010; Bose, 2005). Fighting the system from a grassroots perspective has gained traction in the activist communities within and out-with Kashmir. The role identities

play in gaining sympathy from an international audience and the role they have in recruiting more members also plays a role. Perhaps most meaningful is how traditional identity markers such as nationalism and religion have given way to social values identities such as human rights and women's rights, leading to more rhetorically universalist calls for democratic and legal reforms.

A good example of extending the Kashmiri freedom movement to those outside of Kashmir was the school project-turned-campaign-video, 'We are Kashmir' (Mehmoud, 2013).



Figure 3.3: Photos from the Anti-Modi demonstration in front of Downing Street, KSM SOAS Twitter page

The YouTube video, which has gone viral, depicts people holding up signs saying 'Free Kashmir,' or 'You will be free.' Signs and slogans often involve 'End the (Indian) occupation.' A few signs further read, 'Remembrance is resistance.' The project involved sending out requests to groups and individuals who supported the Kashmir freedom movement all over the globe. The response was rather demographically diverse, with people holding up signs in pictures from cities in England, Scotland, and the United States to Malaysia, Pakistan, India,

Azad Kashmir, Poonch District, Jordan, Gaza, and Afghanistan. One of the messages from Poonch, a district that straddles the LoC is, 'No one can divide us.' From Gaza, young children hold up colourful signs alleging that Gaza stands with Kashmir. In Azad Kashmir, a sign claims 'We want freedom,' in addition to a message comparing Indian-held 'Curfewed Kashmir' to 'Gitmo,' the controversial US detention centre in Cuba, Guantanamo Bay. Below a poster board with some statistics on Kashmir can be found

the hashtags #Viva La Azadi and #Viva La Kashmir. In one five-minute video, it is depicted that the Kashmir issue is a concern for everyone in the world. The title, 'We are Kashmir,' says it all. The campaigners want to express solidarity with other movements and want others to relate to the Kashmir issue, using populist references and universal rallying cries. For both KSM Edinburgh and SOAS, young women play important leadership roles, including in the establishment and continuation of the societies over the years. Young women were also important advocates and were prominent guests and speakers at events and meetings. Quite a few of the women have had professional backgrounds in journalism, social work, academia, and more. In both Edinburgh and London, female academics and activists were invited to speak via Skype at meetings from the United States as well as from within IAK. Young women are often the subjects of pictures on the Facebook pages of KSM SOAS and Edinburgh. This is contrasted with pictures, for example, of older crowds gathered at the Modi protest. The photos in Figure 3:3 were shared on the Twitter page of KSM SOAS. They are meant to demonstrate evidence of various groups coming together on the common grounds of being against the prime Minister of India's purported discrimination. In contrast to an older generation of protesters dominated by South Asian men, pictures of KSM protests reveal young, often smiling people of diverse backgrounds. On the Kashmir Students' Campaign Twitter feed, they display pictures of protesters gathered outside the Indian High Commission in London in February of 2015 protesting sexual violence in Kashmir. The following year, KSM SOAS participants were photographed protesting the alleged molesting of a



Figure 3:4 Photo from KSM SOAS May 2016 protest of the alleged sexual assault of a minor girl in Handwara, IAK, KSM SOAS Facebook page

schoolgirl in Handwara (figure 3:4). For these demonstrations, rather than stencilled black signs, student protests usually depict people holding a myriad of colourful, hand-written and drawn signs, especially in the case of short-notice gatherings, or gatherings protesting a

specific or recent issue or event.

The real contrast is perhaps starker when comparing images from JKLF meetings to pictures of KSM meetings. Pictures on the JKLF website depict an overwhelmingly male audience, while depictions of audience attendance at KSM meetings is mixed. The cover photo for KSM Edinburgh's Facebook page as well as their Twitter account display a heterogeneous group of activists (this thesis, figure 6:2, p. 190). Both accounts, which are publicly accessible, are often the first introduction to the KSM for those accessing information on the group online. The depictions of a more youthful, more equal gender ratio can offer much in the way of positive first impressions for potential female participants. Women in both groups have taken prominent leadership positions and have been critical in the organization and expansion of the societies to other campuses across the UK. Women have been described as the 'backbone of the society' and have been described as essential for moving the Kashmiri freedom movement forward both within and outside of Kashmir.

Young men and women alike have expressed great reverence to the position of women in Kashmir who have, in their perspectives, persevered despite the disappearance of their husband and sons, despite years and years of conflict and trying to raise their children under often precarious conditions of intervals of strikes and curfews, militant threats, and the very real threats of security forces overstepping their bounds, causing harm to civilians. It is common on Facebook groups to share photos and stories which give praise to the strong Kashmiri woman – the sisters and mothers of Kashmir. Depictions of strength in the face of adversity tend to be framed in a 'resistance' master

frame and can coincide with stories of youth throwing stones, protest rock videos, or women with guns. It is seemingly meant to distinguish the contemporary freedom

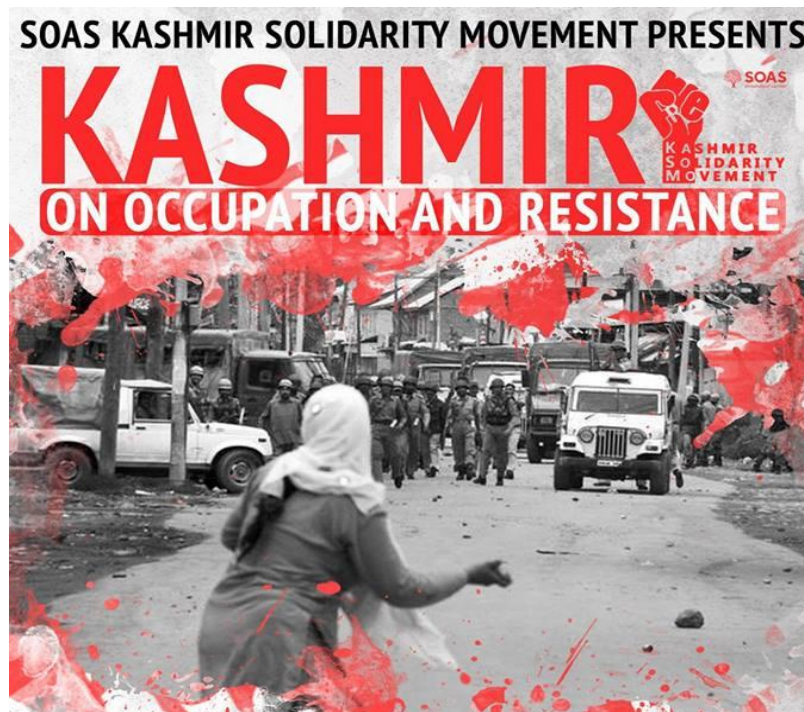


Figure 3:5 KSM SOAS event poster March 2016

movement from some older generation of freedom supporters which have passed the torch over to the next generation of freedom activists, whose resistance has grown bold and widespread, from the 2008 attempt to march to the border or 2010s uprisings that continue without specific leadership (Kaul, 2013). The

resistance frame

speaks out in both non-violent and aggressive acts. Youths throwing stones is an act of defiance, with their occupiers wielding loaded guns while they are only armed with stones. The Kashmiri woman is depicted almost as often as young stone pelters, approaching heavily-armed trained military men with nothing but anger and exasperation, desperately pointing and yelling at them. In other heavily-shared posts, a woman is depicted holding a gun and she is praised for fighting back at the oppressors. In figure 3:5, an event poster, 'On Occupation and Resistance,' depicts a lone Kashmiri woman armed only with a stone facing off armoured vehicles and about a dozen armed security personnel. The title itself could be a tribute to Fahad Shah's (2013) *On Occupation and Resistance*, a collection of writings from Kashmir, written by Kashmiris of their personal experiences living under occupation. Although the picture probably cuts out a larger protest happening behind the woman, the photo and the corresponding title of the event implies that the strong woman (Kashmir), armed only with a stone, is willing to fight for the freedom from her occupiers (India). The Kashmir woman simultaneously represents strength and perseverance, while also appealing to the sympathy of a cause not our own. The new generation of Kashmiris

express that they will succeed where preceding generations failed. They will fight for their freedom at all costs. The new generation provides strength and hope for a future independent Kashmir, and this is not restricted to militancy,

What does Azadi mean for Kashmir Freedom Activists?

Interview respondents all referenced the importance of identifying with the human rights situation in IAK. Some highlighted the women's human rights while others highlighted freedom of movement or speech. Those coming to the UK from IAK have a sense of freedom that they may have never experienced anywhere in India. In a conversation with one of my respondents, former university student in Edinburgh, he also made it a point of reference for a place where one can truly be free; there are no checkpoints, no curfews. When asked 'what does azadi mean to you?' his reply involved a descriptive scene where he could freely 'wear a Che Guevara t-shirt and raise the Kashmiri flag in Lal Chowk.' Freedom of movement and omnipresent curfews during times of conflict in IAK impact the local economy greatly. One respondent was recounting how curfews can sometimes go on for weeks, giving people a very small window with which to purchase their basic essentials. And even during those times, people are allegedly attacked arbitrarily. The respondent, a young man currently studying in the UK, had described an event in which he witnessed security forces beating people who were buying goods at a market outside of a mosque during one of these periods of curfew relaxation. Curfews have other impacts on economic development in the Valley. During a trip to Srinagar in May 2013, I was having a casual conversation with one of the KSM Scotland members who had studied in Edinburgh prior to returning to Kashmir. Having completed a business-related degree, he mentioned in perhaps a casual, reflective way how he would love to open up a McDonald's in Kashmir. 'The people here would go crazy,' he mused. But he quickly dismissed the thought since he would not be able to pay the franchise costs reliably with constant curfews and *bandhs* (strikes). Expressing some seemingly banal concerns such as wearing a controversial article of clothing or having an available source of McDonald's French fries close by makes the Kashmir freedom cause perhaps more digestible for the average sympathizer in Western countries. Expressing grievances in these terms could suggest that Kashmiri youths are interested in a modern and perhaps more globalized Kashmir. Azadi has historical precedent and thus forms part of the cultural repertoire of

the youth activist. Azadi also has modern constructions. These constructions are often displayed in contemporary forms of art and film.

In November 2013, I attended a KSM Edinburgh meeting where a documentary was being shown. After an opening statement by one of the committee members about the historical context of the conflict, she went on to discuss human rights violations in Kashmir. The documentary by Sanjay Kak (2007) which was freely available online was entitled *Jashn-e-Azadi*, or 'How We Celebrate Freedom.'¹⁵ The rather artistic introduction

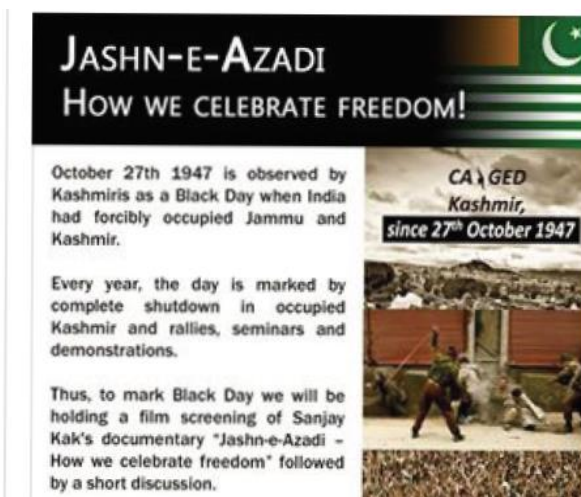


Figure 3: 6 *Jashn-e-Azadi* flyer, KSM Edinburgh 2 Nov. 2013

in the film shows the view of Kashmir from behind barbed wire, a scene often imitated in artistic photos and flyers displayed or passed out at events. This imagery of people trapped behind barbed wire or of Kashmiris being

'caged' as the corresponding flyer depicts is further explored in poetic verse and popular hip-hop songs. *Jashn-e-Azadi* in particular juxtaposes the zeal that Indian soldiers celebrate Indian Independence Day with the lacklustre that Kashmiris celebrate it. Instead of proudly observing the day, the usually bustling streets of central Srinagar are empty during the processions, as Sanjay Kak demonstrates in the documentary. In addition to documentary, Kak has displayed Kashmir through the photojournalist lens. Although not available in the UK at the time of this writing, Kak released a book *Witness/Kashmir 1986-2016* (2017) which has been well-received in India. According to a reviewer in Hindustan Times, Manjula Narayan (2017), the book forces the Indian middle class to consider the roll of the Indian state in Kashmir, to 'make us think about what's happening there because we've bought into the idea that the ends justify the means, the brutalization...'

¹⁵ *Jashn-e-Azadi* (2007) can be viewed freely on YouTube. Here is one stable link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i74IKRnPR7Y>

The images in the book, Kak is quoted as saying, is meant to “trigger a conversation about the place of creative practices in this world of conflict” (Narayan, 2017). The review is not the best replacement for a hardbound copy of the book, but it does give exemplary images, some of which can be found on other sites as well. More importantly, it is meant as a vivid conversation piece. It is art, but it is art that demands to be engaged with. Documentaries, photojournalism, and contemporary music as well as more traditional verse and dance infuses contemporary re-imaginings of Kashmiri culture.

The hip-hop artist MC Kash was often mentioned at meetings and excerpts occasionally posted in the Facebook groups. The group’s videos, mostly in English, are shared widely among activists on social media and aimed at raising awareness of the violations in IAK. KSM SOAS publicized the group’s visit to a small venue in Manchester for a live show named #RebelRepublik after their similarly named album, advertised on KSM Edinburgh’s page as ‘Kashmir’s first mainstream English hip-hop album’ which serves as a ‘remembrance of anguish of Kashmir’s forgotten infliction, and of resistance against an unrelenting conflict.’ MC Kash is not alone in providing an alternative form of musical resistance. Mehak Ashraf, with the stage name Menime is a young female rapper from Kashmir. I never heard of her through the KSM but in a short video I discovered on YouTube, she explains that she finds it difficult to be accepted as a rapper in conservative Kashmir (The Quint, 2018). Coinciding themes of identity, art, and resistance remain as key topics for popular events at KSM SOAS.



Figure 3:7 Sample photos at KSM SOAS photo exhibition, 'Kashmir: the forgotten conflict,' London, February 2016

The Figure 3:7 photo exhibition was during ‘Kashmir week’ in February 2016 and included several academic and roundtable discussions. The exhibition of photos which displayed themes of occupation, subjugation, and resistance carried on the week after the roundtables finished in the campus building housing art exhibitions. Graffiti art captures a public view of art and can be seen in Kashmir, often in spaces where people frequent, and can be displayed further abroad and reinterpreted or framed differently for different crowds. The recurrent theme in photographic and graffiti art is resistance. KSM Edinburgh posted an article on their site in November 2012 which proclaims that ‘Graffiti shows hope...hope is resistance.’ During my visit to IAK, I snapped a few pictures of graffiti art displayed on walls of buildings on a riverwalk in Srinagar. Figure 7 shows two images. The first one, ‘Revolution is Loading...’ is used quite often in other photo opportunities. Standing alone, the expression leads us to believe that Kashmiris are waiting for the right time to stand up and fight against their perceived oppressors. The other phrase ‘Breaking Kalashnikovs,’ I am assuming is tagged by the same artist, as the same logo appears alongside both images. ‘Breaking Kalashnikovs’ is an interesting expression because we don’t know whether the writer wants to break security force personnel weapons or wants



Figure 3:8: Graffiti art, Srinagar May 2013

to retaliate with weapons. Essentially, these two images taken together further the story of Kashmiri youth mobilisation: they desire change, but there is uncertainty on how to achieve this revolution.

After my six months stay in London, KSM SOAs continued to host events which explicitly addressed Kashmiri identity and resistance as expressed in art. A post on their Facebook page advertising an event in November 2016: ‘Creative art forms, including poetry, fiction, and music, are integral to know Kashmiris, both in Kashmir and in diaspora, make sense

of identity while imagining a better future.’ The post provides an Eventbrite link with an attached image of the word ‘Azadi’ in graffiti on a dilapidated brick wall, presumably in Indian Kashmir. During the same month, the group again wished to highlight the ‘cultural dimension to the struggle of Kashmiris...through poetry.’ The verses spoken in a combination of Urdu, Kashmiri, and English ‘over chai and Kashmiri music’ highlights the reimagining of historical traditions into contemporary culture of resistance. Numerous other poetry nights have been advertised and even where events are more academic in nature, there is often a guest speaker reciting poetry or performing spoken word.

The KSM Edinburgh group also hosted events which highlighted Kashmiri culture in addition to raising awareness for the conflict there. As the KSM Edinburgh group was much smaller in comparison to KSM SOAS, they had to often rely on joint activities with other groups. During my time with KSM Edinburgh, a rather well-attended ‘cultural event’ was held in early December 2014. During the preceding meeting in November, it was decided that they would invite Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the Tibet society, and the Marx society to attend and perhaps say something cross-promotional about their campaigns. The conclusion was an event entitled ‘Cultures of Resistance’ and members of several other societies came to network. However, the event was definitively about Kashmir. With a small entrance donation, there was some food and Kashmiri tea followed by the usual introductory statement about the Kashmir conflict. The main feature of the night, however, was not the mini speech by representatives of the SJP or ‘Sonny’ of KSM, but the traditional representation of Sufi dance by a dance student at the University, a European student playing guitar and singing a song about resistance, and the poetry readings that were both traditional verse as well as more contemporary poetry about the conflict. It should be noted that I obliged to read one of the English poems that spoke of flowers blooming in Kashmir, while a committee member read another poem in English by the contemporary Agha Shahid Ali. This poem recounts the tragedy of Gawkadal Bridge whereby protesters trapped on a bridge were shot by Indian paramilitary forces. The surreal nature of the poem has a presumably young man shot on the bridge returning to a loved one, perhaps in a dream:

‘Don’t tell my father I have died,” he says,
and I follow him through blood on the road
and hundreds of pairs of shoes the mourners
left behind, as they ran from the funeral,
victims of the firing. From windows we hear
grieving mothers, and snow begins to fall
on us, like ash. Black on edges of flames,
it cannot extinguish the neighborhoods,
the homes set ablaze by midnight soldiers.
Kashmir is burning...’

‘Kashmir is burning’ is the same phrase a Kashmiri journalist had used when he described events unfolding that led eventually to the crackdown by Indian security forces on militant activity. His phrasing, expressed from the perspective of a Kashmiri Pandit, was an eerie prelude or warning about the resurgence of militant activity that would result in yet another conflict escalation. This history of protest, security force backlash, and reinvigorated militancy is a warning of darker days to come if peaceful resolutions are not found in a timely manner.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the new Kashmir freedom movement, with the intention of capturing the perspective of the Kashmiri activist. To this end, I gave an overview of the strategies of the new movement, including its special attention to using social media as a medium for drawing attention to the Kashmir conflict. Often this is done in English and aimed at raising awareness for the Kashmiri cause in order to increase its presence in a crowded international campaigns arena. Specifically, one of the key elements in mobilisation for Kashmiris and to gain international sympathy for azadi is the scholarship on the role militarization has in making the valley prime ground for abuses to occur. In literature on Kashmir and more generally, militarization is seen as an acceptance of a patriarchal role in society. Naturally, this line of thinking is followed through analysis of the women’s roles in resisting both patriarchy and occupation. Although women have been active in resistance to Indian occupation (and promoting their own human rights as women), this has become much more publicized. Photos of schoolgirls throwing stones have circulated the internet causing both backlash and praise.

There is a grand analogy between women being subjugated by a patriarchal force and Kashmiris being subjugated by an occupying force. In both instances, it is necessary to resist this oppression to reclaim agency. The contemporary azadi resistance, although primarily nonviolent, is indeed aimed at overcoming a greater foe through, in some instances, small acts of resistance. The youths in Kashmir and the transient youths in the UK that I have worked with have expressed their resistance in several ways. For some, it has been through prose and art or hip hop, with lyrics and verses that denounce Indian occupation. For others it is attending protests, holding placards, speaking out against Indian actions in Kashmir through lobbying and by exposing security force brutalities on Facebook. The youths are quick to react to events in Kashmir and are sure to use a universal language of human rights in order to express their grievances to the world. Perhaps most intriguing for the new movement is the role of women in the movement. Young women are very active in leading KSM groups and protests within Kashmir as well as in establishing new groups. Azadi for many Kashmiris is the freedom to live without fear of oppression, the ability to live without curfews, the ability to speak freely and openly even when they are dissenting authority. For women, this is also the freedom to pursue the careers they wish, even if it is to become a rapper. For the new generation of azadi activists, azadi and resistance has become a part of their very culture.

CHAPTER 4

Internationalization of the Struggles for a Free Kashmir

The new azadi movement has been influenced by and evolved from the previous phases of the azadi movement, with activism from pre-Partition against the Dogra regime to mobilizing in support of a plebiscite on Kashmir to mixed support for a militant option against what has been perceived as an Indian occupation of the State. As reviewed in the previous chapter, 'The New Kashmiri Freedom Movement,' the contemporary movement is one marked by nonviolent opposition to an oppressive security force which meets protesters with a heavy hand and often without punishment from a legal system that is slow to provide justice for victims of security force abuse. Often this abuse is sanctioned through draconian laws such as the Public Safety Act which permits for the incarceration of those suspected of disturbing the peace for up to two years without release, even if the accused is not officially sentenced. This space opens up for further abuse through extorting bribes from people to secure their release, slow action to exhume remains in mass graves, abuse of prisoner cover-ups, intimidating and 'roughing up' civilians, abusing women during unwarranted searches, no restitution for lost wages or physical harm for innocents locked away, and even the false labelling of civilians as militants in order to escape retribution for extrajudicial killings. These are all consequence of a long-term and high military presence in Kashmir.

Given everything that Kashmiris have experienced, the freedom movement has been sustained over the generations and passed to a new generation in order to fight for justice and reclaim agency as an independent country. For many, as long as they are under the rule of India, abuses will inevitably continue. Kashmiris, however, are no longer alone in their quest for independence. They have support from and have gained strategies of resistance from other parts of the world such as the Palestine movement against Israel or the Kurdish movement for self-determination. In addition to other self-determination movements, such entities such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have acknowledged the atrocities that Kashmiris have faced. Documentaries such as Kashmir's Trails of Torture and Inshallah Kashmir have brought the reality of Kashmiri struggles to the outside world. One of the most important outlets

for the new azadi movement has been social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook which offer Kashmiris a voice in an international forum that would otherwise be drowned out by the nationalist India and Pakistan media sources with their own particular stand on the resolution of the Kashmir conflict – often which does not provide for the option of a free Kashmir. Like the Arab Spring, the 2010 summer of unrest revealed to an international audience the story of the Kashmiri rather than the story of those who would be perceived as the oppressor or the occupying force.

This chapter moves on from understanding the new Kashmir movement with a particular emphasis on Kashmiris themselves and aims to see just how what was largely perceived as a separatist movement in the West became to be seen as a freedom movement against occupation. The internationalization of the Kashmir freedom cause began with Kashmiris but was quickly taken on by other people in South Asia and other people out-with South Asia. The chapter first puts into perspective how the Kashmir movement has gone international through a vignette about a vigil held outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh. It then zooms out from this specific example of mobilisation in Edinburgh by examining the transnational mobilisation efforts of Kashmiris in the diaspora from both the Indian and Pakistan Administered sides and notes the rise of mobilization outside of Kashmir, through activation of the diaspora.

Kashmir's freedom movement Abroad

On 5 February 2013, the first Kashmir Solidarity Movement (KSM) Edinburgh vigil was held outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh. I arrived at the event and was asked to assist with the re-lighting of the candles that framed pictures of young Kashmiris who have died in clashes with Indian security forces in what is often argued to have been peaceful protests. After others settled in, gathering around in larger than anticipated numbers despite the cold, the speeches began. The first speech was one of the organizers of the KSM in Edinburgh. He was a seasoned activist, probably in his forties and originally from Pakistan. He introduced one of the committee members, a University student who began to speak about Kashmir. The speeches weren't just from Kashmiris or from people from South Asia, nor was Kashmir the only topic. Pre-empting the Scottish

referendum that would be happening in less than two years' time, there was a Scottish man who spoke out against India, against England, against Israel and against the United States. The issue wasn't Kashmir alone, but it was about the evils of capitalism and imperialism and about waging wars in other countries. The focus extended beyond Kashmir to Scotland, Palestine, and Tibet. The gathering served as a statement about every nation's purported right to self-determination. But, the issues went beyond self-determination, separatism, and secessionism. Representatives from Stop the War movement were there as well as Scotland Against Criminalizing Communities (SACC). Although the different organizations may have had their 'pet' cause or overarching campaign, the combination of groups formed a tenuous link to one another.

The Scottish pro-independence movement was picking up momentum in the lead-up to the September 2014 referendum. This served to provide a representative, local cause within which to compare to a range of campaigns of local and global significance to a range of actors and interest groups. For Kashmiri activists, the Scottish referendum provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness and solicit support for Kashmir self-determination by framing Kashmir independence as a right akin to Scottish independence. This setting extended the range of participants to those directly related to the Kashmir freedom, or azadi, movement to incorporate a rather diverse and more loosely related set of activists. There were the supporters of an independent Scotland who stood in solidarity with another nation's right to self-determination, there were those who were opposed to Westminster's involvement in foreign wars which they perceive to only harm innocent people. After the speeches were over, the lead organizer handed a letter to the consulate stating grievances against India regarding Kashmir. They claim that Kashmir is the most militarized zone in the world with estimated troop levels of around 700,000 according to many activists. This claim is reflected on numerous fliers and widely distributed via social media and in popular YouTube videos as well (Mahmoud, 2013).

Observations of the heterogeneous gatherings of diverse populations and representation from various activist groups, it was clear that KSM was a transnational social movement and could only rightly be studied as such. Analysing separatist movements as social movements is not novel but is particularly evident in the contemporary context of transnational student and youth-driven movements. The youth who assemble abroad reflect the youths on the streets in their respective locations,

shouting slogans, waving placards, and throwing stones. But how does one reconcile identitarian claims inherent in a movement for one's own homeland with the desire to collectively mobilize diverse populations? How do they perceive the movement for themselves as Kashmiri or South Asian activists and how do they alternatively 'sell' the movement to out-group activists in an effort to turn their domestic transgressions into a meaningful transnational call to action? These processes may begin in a loosely defined diaspora population with direct stakes to the Kashmir conflict or with some other associated ties to a distant homeland. However, these campaigns cannot work as isolated acts of activism, but must respond to developments that unfold over time. Diaspora populations need to be flexible in responding to events and how they interpret them for a diaspora community of activists as well as for affiliate causes and campaigns. Before taking a closer look at how Kashmiri activism has evolved into a transnational cause affiliated with human rights groups and other self-determination campaigns, I will survey some of the literature that helps to describe what diaspora activism is and how it can develop into transnational activism.

Diaspora Activism and Transnational Mobilisation

Diaspora activism and indigenous collective mobilisation movements depend on a group of peoples' identification with a community as either a pre-existing or formulate condition for mobilisation. Literature on the transnational diaspora has looked closely at the various activities of migrant communities and how and why they mobilize. Assuming that Benedict Anderson's assessment that a nation is an imagined, and rather malleable community which may be subject to evolution and reactionary interpretations; a community of people in forced or voluntary exile may be interpreted as Sokefield (2006) proposes 'imagined transnational communities.' Literature on imagined transnational communities, or for the sake of ease 'transnational diaspora,' tends to reference the activation of groups of migrants living abroad or the process of becoming a collectivity through shared experiences of suffering. Such is argued to be the case with scholarly works on those living in refugee camps or in forced exile due to war and conflict. Of particular note are the frequent associations of politically-conscious diaspora communities of South Asian descent engaging in ethnonationalist movements as is the case of Tamils (Fuglerud,

1999), Sikh/Punjabi religio-ethnic mobilisation as discussed by Tatla (1999) and a glimpse into the transition of Pakistan's Mirpuri migrants in Britain to perceive themselves as Kashmiris (Ballard, 1991; Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011). Features and commonalities of ethnic awareness in the diaspora also seem to apply to refugee communities closer to their native homeland as is discussed by Sayigh (1979) and Knudsen (2005) who worked with displaced Palestinians in Lebanon. Research on diaspora Tamil communities also tend to focus on engagement with homeland politics and the reciprocal impact the conflict situation 'back home' has on fomenting their ethnic identities abroad (Thiranagama, 2014; Vidanage, 2009). Adamson asserts that diasporas, like other normative terms are 'social constructs.' Adamson argues that diaspora can be '...viewed as the products or outcomes of transnational mobilization activities by political entrepreneurs engaged in strategic social identity construction' (2012: 25-6). In this lens, diaspora inherently take on a political connotation and are perceived as rational actors. As much as there exists literature on how diaspora communities abroad develop a strong sense of national identity, Jaffrelot and Therwath (2007) argue that especially for nation-states with high amounts of nationals living abroad temporarily or permanently, there is as much 'reverse long-distance nationalism.' In this case, rather than a diaspora population attempting to influence politics 'back home,' 'political entrepreneurs from the mainland generat[e] nationalist aspirations among the diaspora' (Jaffrelot and Therwath, 2007: 2).

Diaspora populations are rational actors, but they are also perceived to be as actors who base their decisions on more primordial motives. Anderson (1998) asserts that there is the desire for diaspora populations to re-connect to one's displaced homeland, even one that has never been directly experienced before, as in the case of second and third generation diaspora. Here Anderson reflects upon the concept of the 'colonial' as an instance of where we begin to see a longing for a homeland, even where one may not go to the motherland (1998: 62). Anderson points to the importance of print media and long-distance travel capabilities as facilitating the rise of nationalism (ibid.). He further blames European economic integration for instigating the rise of (or renewal of) extreme nationalist parties, 'for the thrust of their propaganda is essentially to draw a sharp line between the political nation and the putative original *ethnos*' (ibid: 72). The other type of 'ethnicization of political life' occurs when a community is apart from their homeland, as Anderson notes is the case for Indians living in 'wealthy, post-industrial

states [where] long-distance nationalism is visibly emerging' (ibid: 73). Here Anderson cites the destruction of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya as a contributing factor for Hindus abroad to donate large sums of money to the World Hindu Council.

Jaffrelot and Therwath (2007) make explicit in their argument that it is not just diaspora that influence politics in the motherland but that often political entrepreneurs attempt to influence diaspora populations living abroad. The authors introduce the concept by noting campaigns for the 're-Islamization of Muslims that have migrated to the West,' but move on to draw specific attention to the 'ethno-religious nationalism' of the Hindu far right in India (2007: 2). The RSS in India has penetrated many communities with different factions involved in social engagement in impoverished communities, training youth wings with militant-style drills, and developing attachments to universities via an Indian Student Association (ibid: 3). The World Hindu Council has provided the de facto structure for these various bodies and the RSS have offered ideological framings of a united Hindu 'brotherhood' through the use of 'Sangh Parivar' for uniting the family of Hindu organizations. Local branches, or *shakhas*, formed in various locations where diaspora populations were from East Africa to the United States and Canada. In the United Kingdom, a variation of the RSS, the HSS (the Hindu Volunteer Corps) was formed and *shakhas* quickly multiplied among diaspora cleavages in Birmingham and Bradford (Jaffrelot and Therwath, 2007: 6). Despite several affiliate organizations operating abroad – sometimes due to trying to not be overtly connected to the controversial RSS – the RSS still holds the reigns on ideology in the Hindu nationalist movements abroad. Jaffrelot and Therwath detail the ways in which the organization gets funding through illicit channels, for example, and how a unified Hindu ideology gains traction abroad through religious leaders travelling and giving talks, holding summer camps, and raising temples that display deities across the Hindu pantheon (2007: 10-11). Present in the Neasden Temple in Northwest London is a permanent exhibition on Hinduism which, framed in a nationalist manner, purport that Hindus have invented 'geometry, astronomy, plastic surgery and quantum physics' (ibid: 11).

Beyond general hubris of the superiority of the ways of Hinduism and glorifying a reimagined history of greatness, a unified Hindutva ideology generally means an opposition to monotheism, particularly Islam. Not only did a Hindu brotherhood gain support for the destruction of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, but it also managed to raise revenue from affluent members of the Hindu diaspora in order to build (or as they claim

to *re-build*) the Ram Mandir (Jaffrelot and Therwath, 2007: 13). The threat of the 'Other' grew into a sustained effort to combat the spread of Islam. This was due to events in India such as the Shah Bano verdict and the conversion to Islam by Dalits as well as circumstances abroad which saw the intermingling of faiths in university and inter-faith marriages (ibid: 17). Unification against the other was also made possible due to discrimination faced abroad in 'Christian' countries by right-wing conservatives such as Pat Robertson in the States and everyday discrimination despite an ideological appeal to multiculturalism in the West (ibid: 19).

Long-distance nationalism and diaspora mobilization are not altogether new processes. However, a journey that once took months to take can take only hours and a message can be sent in an instant. Contemporary long-distance nationalism may be part of a wider process of modernization: processes of globalization, technological advances, and better access to education can all provide the means and structures to mobilize. Modernization processes can bring about societal convergence which is perhaps best juxtaposed in Barber's (1996) *Jihad vs. McWorld*, whereby he purports that the world is coming together and falling apart at the same time. To put it simply, the point he makes is that the forces of globalization are pitted against the forces of tribalism. Although these forces are opposed to one another, they often use the same methods for achieving their ends. Barber's usage of Jihad is not one which safeguards Islam or Muslims but refers to the term as 'disintegrated tribalism and reactionary fundamentalism' which is in opposition to but simultaneously dependent upon 'integrative modernization and aggressive economic and cultural globalization' (Barber, 1996: 12). Pragmatism dictates that even the most conservative of religious sects use the internet to raise funds, promote their cause, and recruit sympathizers as well as actors in their cause – be that violent or nonviolent support. McWorld is a homogenizing influence which includes Internet, satellite television, smart phones and iconic soda pops. All of these items are used in transnational diaspora activism, regardless of the aim of the cause.

For Fuglerud (1992), like Anderson, certain facets of modernity seem to highlight the tilt towards endemic nationalism. Paradoxically, nationalism appears to be a facet of modernity, but ethnonationalism seems to be a return to a sort of backward, primordial order. Fuglerud juxtaposes this by reporting a differentiation in conceptions of nationalism, whereby the 'old' form of nationalism is depicted as 'Western, territorial, rational, lateral and civic versus Eastern, ethnic, organic, vertical and genealogical

nationalism' (1999:12). Much literature on the Kashmir conflict seems to highlight the latter sort of nationalism, depicting the Kashmiri separatist movement as ethnically and/or religiously motivated in spite of circumstantial evidence that points to the more 'rationalized' version of nationalism. Furthermore, this rigid narrative of ethnonationalism does not account for non-Kashmiris supporting a free, autonomous or independent Kashmir.

Nationalism, although seen as a consequence of modernity, has its roots in history. Fuglerud (1999) recounts the rise of Tamil nationalism and Tatla (1999) recounts the rise of Sikh nationalism, both facilitated by colonial and postcolonial conditions. Kashmiris, Tamils, and Sikhs all trace their origins abroad to well before they became a politicized 'diaspora' community. Early migrants left for work opportunities and their linkages back home were less 'political' as it was economic, social and cultural. Sikh communities, for example, still practices endogamy by calling brides and bridegrooms over from Punjab (Tatla, 1999: 66). Tamil migrants to Norway went for work and then for educational opportunities once visa restrictions didn't permit this type of immigration (Fuglerud, 1999: 57). Kashmiris migrated early on to Britain to work in the shipping industry (Ballard, 1991). However, this relatively relaxed flow of migration drastically changed due to critical events back home. Tamils in Norway were able to avoid getting sent back home due to a civil war going on in Sri Lanka (Fuglerud, 1999: 56). Kashmiris on the Indian side during Partition fled to the Pakistan side due to partition and subsequent wars, with a massive influx of Mirpuri-Kashmiris migrating to Britain after Pakistan built a dam that ruined their livelihoods (Ballard: 1991). Palestinians were evicted from their land by Zionists and scattered around to live in refugee camps in various locations in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon (Sayigh, 1979; Knudsen, 2005). These relocating communities, with their various reasons for relocation, both increased and contributed to economic 'chain migration' as well as being influenced by political events found themselves in new locations forming 'new' communities there.

Political events can be interpreted by diaspora populations differently and may be responded to in a variety of ways. Vertovec (2009) highlights the varying dimensions of homeland politics as generally, diasporic politics of an established migrant community, lobbying efforts and financial support to political parties 'back home,' support for and financing of subversive activities, or facilitating peace efforts and reconstruction in post-conflict situations. Lastly, he identifies '*mass protest and consciousness-raising*,' citing a

model of the organization of worldwide protests among Kurds which successfully brought 'Kurdish issues to global attention' (2009: 95). Although international consciousness-raising has been recognized as an activity of migrant communities, diaspora research tends to focus on transnational links with the homeland. Sokefeld and Bolognani define a diaspora as 'an imagination of transnational community, that is, an imagination of community that refers to an elsewhere, which unites people in distant places and bridges different geographical and, by implication political spaces' (2011: 114). Political spaces, however, may comprise of various 'communities' working in conjunction with one another. Tatla (1999), for example, notes the support for Khalistan by Kashmiris abroad. As far as diaspora Kashmiris are concerned, Sokefeld and Bolognani (2001) and Brubaker (1998) offer some of the few contributions on the topic. Sokefeld and Bolognani, though not necessarily the aim of their research, only cursorily mention interaction between Kashmiri groups and civic organizations such as movements for workers' rights (2011). Nationalism, and ethnonationalism at once separate communities as well as bind disparate communities abroad into an 'overarching' community whereby one identity is more salient than another. Refugees and displaced peoples simultaneously seek acceptance and similar rights from their host communities while being strong advocates for retaining their native languages and traditional customs. It is in this context that we can see the Kashmir Workers Association affirming the right to be distinguished as a nation vis-à-vis India or Pakistan, but erstwhile condoning the essence of all South Asians in Britain the right to equal access to work and education as other ethnic groups in Britain.

Identity markers influence participation in campaigns in a variety of ways and it is no different for Kashmir activists. Understanding and interpreting the ways in which these identities motivate participation is a nuanced exercise. Identity markers are salient and malleable. They are largely not pre-determined, static factors but always in the process of being re-evaluated in the new circumstances and contexts that transient populations find themselves. Ethnonational literature and scholarly works on homeland politics offer a way to begin to understand these dynamics but do not wholly apply to modern transient, often heterogeneous communities such as global rights activists. Essentially it is a combination of findings from this body of literature along with literature that homes in activist communities that better begin to understand the transnational activist communities which support a free Kashmir. This next section highlights the type of literature which lay at the intersection between homeland politics and transnational

activism before moving towards social movements which, I assert more accurately characterizes the contemporary azadi movement than isolating these bodies of literature can do.

Activating Transnational Communities

The literature on long-distance nationalism generally references either the activation of a group of migrants living abroad or the process of becoming a collectivity through shared experiences of suffering, as is the case with literature on those living in refugee camps or in forced exile due to war or conflict. This literature, unlike strictly ethnonational literature, takes into account the formation and transformation of ethnic and other communities living outside of their 'homeland.' In Adamson's analysis, she re-visits the articulation of transnational networks as outlined by Keck and Sikkink in their book *Activists Beyond Borders* (1998). Here she describes transnational networks as either having essentially 'instrumental goals,' 'shared causal ideas,' or 'shared principled ideas or values' (Adamson, 2012: 32). She continues to raise the issue that some transnational networks are essentially '...defined primarily by a shared collective identity...marker...such as ethnic, national or religious identity' (ibid.). Raising the issue of national identity or a collective sense of belonging can indeed serve to unite diaspora communities. As a case in point, she reflects on how the Tibetan national movement was essentially started by exiled and ex-patriot 'political entrepreneurs' (ibid: 35).

This body of literature also attempts to describe the rise of nationalism due to contextual and event-linked circumstances. One of the common findings articulated in these works are what Vidanage (2009) discovered while working on the impact the Tamil diaspora had on home communities and is highlighted in Tatla's (1999) work on the Sikh diaspora, is that a 'critical moment' is required in order to strengthen the communal bonds of a diaspora community. Already having established roots with some cohesion in the community, be it via sending remittances or making marriage connections, the 'critical event' activates the diaspora (and in some literature, the community thus 'becomes' a diaspora). Gayer purports that the 'transformation of overseas Sikh and Kashmiri communities into diasporas illustrate vividly the volatility of constructions of otherness

among overseas South Asians' (2007: 4). This volatility is seen as reflective upon 'political turmoil in the homeland or socio-economic conflicts in the country of residence...' (ibid.).

Tatla discusses the importance of the 'critical event' for strengthening and reinforcing an ethnic consciousness that has already been fostering. Tatla asks three questions relevant to my own research: 'first, the parameters within which a diaspora mobilizes; secondly, the characteristic nature of discourse on the Sikh homeland; and thirdly, the impact of a "traumatic event" upon ethnic consciousness and collective loyalty' (183). Tatla's and the other research on the list has leaned toward the idea that certain circumstances tend to be present when ethnic consciousness is most salient and leads to mobilization. 'The Indian army's action in the Golden Temple, sudden and unexpected as it was, is one of those "critical events", whose impact is likely to last far longer. It has already punctured Sikhs' patriotic fervour towards India, leaving a permanent scar on their minds' (Tatla, 1999: 184). Tatla portrays that, for the most part up until the events of 1984, the Sikhs were loyal to India, but after the event, a Sikh consciousness was permitted to awaken with a renewed fervour for a demand for Khalistan:

'The dishonour and hurt felt by Sikhs led to a spontaneous response in the diaspora, with protest marches and various other developments that generated anger against Indian officials and an outcry for independence – part of the Sikh collective consciousness, but an idea that needed no expression before June 1984' (1999: 197).

Perhaps one of the best examples of a critical event becoming a rallying cry for dissidents was the Palestinian 'Disaster' of 1948. Sayigh describes this as the point whereby ordinary 'peasants' were transformed into a politically active community (Sayigh, 1979: 5). When Palestinian peasants were rooted from their homes and land and massacred in a mosque despite reports of surrendering, the peasantry found themselves in a situation where their livelihoods depended on opposing the Zionist aggression.

Tatla does reflect upon several conditions for mobilizing the diaspora communities. He claims that unlike the diaspora being mobilized based around events that quickly fade out, the event of the Golden Temple was more lasting. For Kashmiris abroad, mobilization has been dotted with a series of events which seem to 'remind' Kashmiris of their Kashmiri-ness. These events, however, can be interpreted rather differently depending on the timing, who is involved, what other communities can sympathize, etc. Sokefeld and Bolognani noted Kashmiri mobilization when their

ethnic/national identity was seen as 'threatened' through de facto classification as Pakistani or Indian as opposed to Kashmiri, as well as the reaction to human rights abuses in Kashmir. Kashmiri involvement with Labour campaigns in pursuit of workers' rights may seem like a more banal depiction of consciousness-raising in comparison. However, connections to socialism date back to pre-Partition Kashmir and the connection is again current when KSM on more than one occasion coordinates an event with the university socialist society. Social welfare, a tenet of Islam – is this an extension of the Kashmiri identity or a convenient ally used as and when desired for positive public relations?

Sokefeld and Bolognani define a diaspora as 'an imagination of transnational community, that is, an imagination of community that refers to an elsewhere, which unites people in distant places and bridges different geographical and, by implication political spaces' (2011: 114). According to them, the process of living outside of one's homeland, even within a community of kin does not constitute a diaspora. Literature on the Kashmiri diaspora does often point to Birmingham and Luton as sites for Kashmir political organizing abroad as these were sites of Bolognani's fieldwork (2011) and Birmingham was the initial home of the JKLF abroad (Sokefeld, 2016). Despite being a site for Kashmir mobilisation, the concept of diaspora is more fluid and what constitutes the Kashmir community is more a reaction to events or situations than a concrete fact. Sokefeld and Bolognani (2011), for instance, point to Mirpuris as not actively identifying themselves as 'Kashmiris' until the launch of the Kashmir National Identity Campaign in Britain in the late 1990s (14). Just like the Sikh migrants to Britain, these migrants were 'activated' under the pretence of some political issue or crisis situation. One campaign alone cannot account for the activation of any particular community but must also be seen in the context of other events and campaigns which may have at least some tenuous links to these campaigns.

Essentially, Kashmiris in the diaspora have probably been influenced as much by identifying with 'homeland' and 'kin' as they are by other social and political movements with which they identify as somehow being 'a part of.' Sokefeld and Bolognani discuss Kashmiri identity in Britain as growing more in relation to events and campaigns than as a consequence of an inherent Kashmiri community in Britain (2012). In fact, migrants from Mirpuri and those from the adjoining Kotli districts in present-day PAK, began a cycle of migration to Britain after skilled seamen working for the British eventually began to

settle in the country and bring their families, well before Partition (Ballard, 1991). A Kashmiri identity in Britain enters much later, as does the support for a free Kashmir. The building of the Mangla Dam led to the displacement of Mirpuri Kashmiris and many did re-locate to Britain. An affiliation to Kashmiris was not so much the effect of a people being displaced, but a people who had suffered the consequences of the dam being built, one that is a primary source of hydroelectric power for Pakistan 'proper,' at the cost to 'Mirpuris who have had to witness the disappearance of much of their most fertile agricultural land, as well as the district's two market towns...beneath the waters of the lake...' (Ballard, 1991: 514). Although differing quite drastically in terms of language, culture, and even religious views historically, Mirpuris, argued Ballard, tended to be '...enthusiastic supporters of a Kashmiri entity which would be entirely independent of both India and Pakistan' (1991: 513). Ballard attributed this less to the region's affiliation with Indian Kashmiris, and more '...as a consequence of disillusionment about the way in which Pakistan has treated them' (ibid).

Orjuela argues that transnational diaspora activism can be ambivalent. 'Home,' she remarks, 'can be a source of pride or embarrassment, a romanticized place for return or a place that conjures up feelings of alienation' (2012: 96). This seems to be particularly true for the Mirpur community who are often not regarded as equals by other Pakistani migrants to the UK, and recently, have begun to assert a distinct identity in separation from Punjabis and/or Pakistanis (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011: 115). This pride in being 'Kashmiri' may not necessarily be solely aimed at an identity construction of a nation without its own state, however. Although there are clearly activists who claim to seek a reunited independent Kashmir (especially since the militant uprising of the late 1980s), much of the affiliations between British Kashmiris and those from the subcontinent are familial and charitable in nature – seeking social ties, potential marriage connections, etc. (Sokefeld and Bolognani, 2011: 126).

Kashmiriyat, or Kashmiri-ness referred to earlier, has been argued as a very real communal identity for all those hailing from Kashmir, regardless of which side of the LoC they have or currently reside, religious affiliation, or in some instances even mother tongue. Equally, it has been attacked as being an artificial monolithic representation of the plural communities of Kashmir (Aggarwal, 2008). Kashmiris from the Valley were not only at odds with Jammuites and Punjabis for historical accounts of oppression and discrimination, but also had clear divides from before partition. 'At the time of accession,

the portion of the state where the creation of Pakistan had its strongest public support lay not in the Kashmir Valley but across the Pir Panjal...’ (a mountain range along the border of present-day IAK) ‘...in Mirpur and the old Poonch principality...’ (Habibullah, 2008: 20). Quite notably, many transnational activists in Britain today are second and third generation Mirpuris. Although it would seem that there is a strong movement from this diaspora for a reunited independent Jammu and Kashmir, there is still hostility and distrust from Kashmiris in IAK today. The question of impact and influence the Kashmiri diaspora community has on this new transnational social movement is one I hope to address in my study. As Della Porta and Tarrow point out, ‘...more transgressive forms of diasporic nationalism...have exacerbated ethnic and linguistic conflicts...’ (2005: 8). Despite the large volume of literature which analyzes Kashmir identity along religious, nationalistic, ethnic, and other identity markers, none of the aforementioned authors addresses the divisions Kashmiris have amongst themselves – that is, Indian Kashmiris vis-à-vis Pakistani Kashmiris.

Pakistani Kashmiris and Indian Kashmiris do not always believe that they have the same culture nor are their visions of a future independent Kashmir the same. And thus, Pakistanis or activist groups led by Pakistanis might not be highly representative of Indian Kashmiris. Further attesting to this fact, was a study on Usenet and yahoo groups, with a case study on a group in 2001 whereby a respondent referred to the large community of Pakistani Kashmiris from the district of Mirpur who have relocated to Britain. This Kashmiri expressed concern that they would buy all their land, that they were violent, and generally not ‘true’ Kashmiris (Rao et.al., 2011: 275) This perspective also points to the initial split in Muslim Conference/National Conference whereby Sheikh Abdullah (largely supported in IAK) would rather have been in a secular India that supported his socialist reforms than in a Pakistan that was opposed to Sufism and would be ruled by large land-holding elites which have been subjugating Kashmiri Muslims since before British colonialism (Akbar, 1985; Schofield, 2010). Issues of conflicting identities of those on either side of the LoC are also echoed by Ellis and Khan (2001) in their work with Kashmir diaspora. Speaking generally, they echo Vertovec’s definition of *transnationalism* which is broadly defined as ‘multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states’ (1999: 447). They identify Kashmiris as a transnational community, highlighting that ‘[t]he processes and activities involve significant proportions of the relevant communities and have stability and continuity over

time and across borders' (2001:169. Given the substantial diaspora of Kashmiris from Azad, or 'Free' Kashmir in PAK in the United Kingdom, their work focuses on this community. As Vidanage notes, 'According to Vertovec, the emergence of 'transnationalism' as a central concept in understanding how global identities are constructed 'from below' and 'on the above' has been a key feature in the contemporary efforts in theorizing diaspora' (2009: 54).

For migrant Pakistanis and Kashmiris in the UK and their children and grandchildren, connections to the 'homeland' are not necessarily a given. Much research on diaspora supports the notion that diasporan identities are constantly in flux, live with mixed feelings towards their adopted homeland and the homeland of their ancestors or their birth (Lyons and Mandaville, 2012: 19). This is certainly true for even those second-generation Kashmiris who may not be very politically active, as Cressey (2006) observed through interviews with youths in Birmingham born in the UK to Pakistani and Kashmiri parents. The attitude of home-not-home resonates in the diaspora during periods of contention. Kashmiris in the diaspora re-connecting to their homeland identity in the UK has happened, for example, in response to violence to Kashmiris by Indian security forces (Sokefeld, 2006: 277). Transnational networks also help to establish ties between the motherland and the adopted homeland through the diffusion of liberation ideologies and organizations such as the JKLF (Ellis and Khan, 2003: 535). For younger Kashmiris, and especially for one young woman studying in London, the KSM offers a more comfortable atmosphere for learning about Kashmir and for engaging with other Kashmiris than groups such as the JKLF which may be male-dominated and comprise of her father and grandfather's generation.

Gayer (2007) highlights how conflicts and fissures in the broader diaspora community raise tensions. He demonstrates how a community is constantly re-negotiating its identity in relation to developments at home as well as in their adopted domiciles. For example, he reflects upon the rise of the British National Party in Britain as contributing to racial tensions in Southall leading to riots, which subsequently brought left-leaning political activists closer to minority communities in Britain (2007: 6). Under circumstances such as these, an event may bring disparate communities together, however, under other circumstances, divisions seem to be highlighted more. Gayer notes that a 'Punjabi' community that was inherently multi-religious was the norm in Southall

pre-dating the rise of a 'Sikh' identity which explicitly detached itself from an 'Indian' identity after the attack on the Golden Temple in 1984 (2007: 9).

Ramamurthy (2013) points to a striking example of the collaboration efforts of Asian youths and the Black Power movement of the late 1970s and 1980s which forged alliances against the perceived discrimination, racial injustices, and police brutality experienced by non-whites in English towns. While recognizing cultural differences, they also highlighted a strength in solidarity to combat these injustices as well as to affirm support for Third-World liberation movements (2002: 2). Numerous branches of Indian Workers Associations (IWA) sprang up across England and became platforms for leftist politics, including taking on board the anti-racist platform of the youth movements. Communist, socialist, and leftist parties have added to their ranks through the promotion of equal opportunities for workers of all backgrounds. The Kashmir Workers Association (KWA) formation served as not only a rebuke against Indian and Pakistani Workers Associations in an effort to claim their own identity, but also as an inferred affirmation of leftist and anti-racist policies. As observed in dialogue at KSM meetings, the Kashmir Identity Campaign was not simply a matter of recognizing Kashmir as an ethnic or national group on a census form, but also served to uphold the right of Kashmiris to oppose an imperialist framework which led to their discrimination.

Since the influx of migrants from Kashmir, and especially from Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK) after the Mangla Dam was built, dislocating a large portion of Mirpuris, Kashmiri associations popped up around the UK. Although primarily focused on local community issues, some Kashmiri organisations were launched with the support of labour movements; other Kashmiris were mobilised as part of a Kashmir Identity campaign. In recent years, however, there has been a stronger push to raise awareness of the Kashmir issue, culminating in the creation of the Kashmir awareness Forum and several university societies which may also have an affiliation to the Kashmir Students Campaign UK. These organizations differ in their approaches and their demographics than what may be considered more hard-line organizations such as the JKLF and Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK which appear to be more focused on the question of a separate Kashmir and other matters of territorial politics. The latter organisations also tend to relay their messages in Urdu and their members tend towards older men. This does not, however, prevent Tehreek e Kashmir from affiliating with a KSM vigil, for example; nor, the JKLF from posing for pictures with members of KSM at a protest.

There are clear linkages between seemingly disparate campaigns, however, much of the literature on diaspora activism cease to address how or why people participate or sympathize with diaspora activism who are not part of the same ethnic or national unit – unless ‘diaspora’ activism may be conceived of in a rather different way. Within much of the literature on transnational diaspora activism and long-distance nationalism, there is little that would relate a transnational social movement to transnational diaspora mobilisation – despite references in this literature for collaborative efforts in voicing common grievances such as the Sikhs and Kashmiris who Tatla (1999) references as at least standing in solidarity with the other movement, is not working in tandem for common goals. However, the phenomenon of a wide range of activists coming together and assisting those they relate to or support in some way – even if it is a self-determination movement – is clearly visible on many university campuses.

As I have purported previously, re-assessing the Kashmir movement as a social movement may bridge the gap in previous literature on the azadi movement. The next section takes a closer look as to how this is done through the lens of student solidarity, which provides an outlet for diaspora and sympathizer mobilization efforts abroad.

Diaspora and Domestic mobilization and student solidarity

The summer of 2010 probably represents more than other periods in IAK the turning point from a domestic movement to a transnational social movement. Haley Duschinski and Bruce Hoffman (2011) have emphasised the role legal advocacy has had on influencing this change after the events in 2010 in IAK. The specific critical event that really kicked off the spiral of protest and subsequent retaliation by security forces was the killing of 17-year-old student, Tufail Ahmad Matoo, after he was shot in the head with a tear gas canister. Although the youth’s death may not have been intentional, it still spurred on massive protests as it raised questions about what a valid use of force against protesting masses in Kashmir was. By October, over 100 people were killed - mostly youths – and many more were detained on grounds of the Public Safety Act (PSA) Kashmir. The PSA, initiated as a ‘preventive-detention’ measure, was used in the arrest of the president of the Kashmir Bar Association (KBA), Mian Qayoom, who went on trial for charges of sedition. ‘Taking place in the Indian state’s own court of law, Qayoom’s judicial hearing

furnished the opportunity for lawyers to protest against the state in an officially sanctioned space' (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011: 8). To show their support for Qayoom, over a hundred KBA members navigated the heavily-patrolled streets to fill the court and in order to petition the withdrawal of charges and other demands (ibid.). Beyond the show of solidarity in a high-profile case, KBA members extend their legal expertise to Kashmir civil society at large by providing legal counsel, coordinating demonstrations, and even mediating among various stakeholders of the separatist movement (ibid.). Duschinski and Hoffman further argue that their status as belonging to part of an institution, yet outside of the executive branches of government provides for a key alternative juridical space. This space permits for the tenuous act of advocacy, despite efforts to quiet this sort of resistance. What is perhaps most crucial is the ability legal advocates have in being civil society 'translators' between 'local and global groups, introducing international frameworks of human rights and humanitarian law and justice processes 'down' into local protest movements...' and 'reframing local protest movements 'up' to cosmopolitan actors in ways that might earn their support' (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011: 11). This analysis shows that legal advocates do offer a bridge between institutional power and the grassroots movements of self-determination supporters. The links are made by the authors between legal advocacy and the movement for self-determination but offer little in the way of supportive evidence between traditional separatists (JKLF and APHC) and legal advocacy. It is not clear in the authors' analysis which stakeholders benefit other than vaguely articulated references to victims in general. The conclusion is perhaps that the authors are focusing upon the relations legal advocates have to street-level protests. After the petition for the release of Qayoom fell flat, the KBA opted for a strike, only covering cases of human rights and illegal detention in an effort to expose the faults within the Indian legal system in Kashmir (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011: 12). In effect, it is unclear how committed the advocates are at the movement for self-determination as opposed to moving towards reforms within the state. The translation between global and local actors by legal advocates as reported by the authors is a valid and critical development of the transnational azadi movement, however, I would argue the *adoption* of legal framings by grassroots activists played a more critical factor than the institutionalized resistance. This represents a further element of translation of legal advocacy to promote the Kashmir struggle for human rights to outside activists. The case of Qayoom offered an indispensable opportunity to mobilize with professional and legal

advocates within and out-with Kashmir and provided the opportunity for framing dissent in a fairly straightforward legal framework rather than a divisive political context.

Transnational mobilization for KSM and affiliated causes are assisted by the transient nature of participants. Many of the students from IAK for KSM Edinburgh and SOAS are often visiting students or on short-term (and some longer-term) degree courses. Some of the students are on a one or two-year program in the UK. This transient nature has surely impacted the society. On the one hand, the students are drawn together because they are seeking to socialize and look for a community outside of their courses, sometimes for personal as well as professional networking purposes. On the other hand, they may be eager to engage in political activities they felt were difficult to access back home, due to the relative freedom they experience in the UK compared to India. Some have had direct links to legal processes and activism within IAK and take their expertise with them when advocating for human rights and azadi in Kashmir.

Throughout the literature on Kashmir, there is reference to engaging with the diaspora community in the UK and elsewhere and 'activating' the diaspora community in response to particularly contentious events. Sokefeld and Bolognani (2011) discuss the activation of the Kashmiri community in response to events in Kashmir and during the Kashmir Identity Campaign and Ballard (1991) discusses how some Kashmiris from the Pakistani side demonstrated a pro-freedom stance after the government of Pakistan made some unpopular decisions which displaced many Kashmiris to the UK. In addition, it is often noted in observations of meetings or online content that there is a will to engage with the diaspora community and to activate them – to spur them to action. From time to time, in the UK and elsewhere, we see a call for Kashmiris to come together in protest and there have been several specific movements and groups that attempt to facilitate coordination and dialogue. These are not, however, without controversy.

In October 2014, there was a march held in London which originated in Trafalgar Square and ended at Downing Street. The march was supported by an amalgamation of pro-freedom and pro-Pakistani Kashmiris and activists and led by the former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. Chaudhry, however, was also the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader. Although the messages on sites promoting

the event such as millionmarchlondon.com (2014)¹⁶ expressed a message of petition against Indian security force abuses, politicians took advantage of the rally and were greeted with mixed support and opposition from the crowds that gathered. When PPP's Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari spoke, he was interrupted by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters who shouted slogans in protest and launched water bottles at the speaker. Overall, the event received mixed reviews. On the one hand, a large crowd did gather and the event did muster press coverage. On the other hand, the event seemed like a large rally aimed at garnering support for Pakistani politicians.

On 26 October 2014, the gathering of the presumptively-named 'Million march' saw a gathering of around only an estimated 5000 Kashmiris despite the claim that there are nearly one million first, second, and third generation Kashmiris currently residing in the UK. The event was organized by former Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) leader, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry (*Dawn*, 2014). The Million march was publicized as being aimed at raising awareness of the long-standing Kashmir dispute; however, as one article reflects, it could have been misconstrued as a politicization tool for Pakistan political parties. *The Kashmir Walla*, an independent news source, ran an article authored by two members of the Kashmir Students Campaign UK - later shared on their Facebook page - regarding the conflicting ideals of the march. The argument against attending the event was quite clearly along the lines that an event organized and publicized by the former prime minister of Azad Kashmir and PPP leader could not be in the favour of Kashmiris since the event sends the wrong message to an international audience which it is purportedly one of its primary purposes. The dissenting author, Rabia Khan, claimed that although a 'welcome step in pushing for greater dialogue,' 'international solidarity for our cause will be hard to muster, when some supposed proponents of self-determination are themselves so ingrained in the political systems of the occupying states' (2014). Instead of relying on the political parties that may be perceived as not furthering the case of Kashmir independence, Rabia expresses hope for a 'grassroots march for Kashmir with sincere intentions, initiated by those without a tarnished representation' (ibid.).

¹⁶ This website no longer exists, but archived news of the march can be found in 'Kashmir million march to go on despite Indian efforts,' (2014) *Dawn*, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1139207>

The argument in the second half of the article for 'Why I attended the 'million march for Kashmir,' was laden with criticism for both the 'self-professed progressive British-educated generation,' who may have not attended due to the assumption of the march being used as a rally for PPP to garner votes in the UK, as well as the 'older and backward generation,' (2014). Abdul Ahmed claimed that although he does not swear 'fealty to the organizers of the event as their sincerity has yet to be proven,' he argues against the march being a pro-Pakistani event. While at the march, he observed that '[n]o political party or Pakistani flags were displayed, no political slogans were chanted, Kashmir and Kashmir alone was the focus' (ibid.). While the arguments for the attendance of the event dished out criticism on a lacklustre response from the 'young hipster activists who regard themselves as artistic martyrs,' (Ahmed, 2014), what is clear from both accounts is that there is a distrust of political parties and a questioning of sincerity from those engaging with the political system. There is a sense that raising awareness about Kashmir is a good thing, however, that this should be accomplished by a grassroots movement that is not actively trying to achieve political gains or garner votes.

The 'Million' march initiated in November of 2014 was held in London as an attempt to show what has been estimated by some as nearly a million ethnic Kashmiris currently residing in the UK. As per the Kashmir Identity Campaign, there was an attempt to overcome the only options on nationality 'tick box' forms which only had the option of being from Pakistan or from India (Sokefeld and Bolognani (2011). The one argument follows the logic that since Kashmir continues to be disputed territory, there should be the option of coming from Kashmir. The Kashmir Identity Campaign was brought up and discussed in relation to the quandary of getting more participants involved that self-identified as Kashmiri. One of the speakers at the KSM SOAS Meet and Greet in October of 2015 was discussing at one point how 'millions had come to the streets to protest after the Amarnath event.' This, he placed in the context of 'the relative failure of the Million march where only 5000 Kashmiris came out to protest in 2014, despite there being a million Kashmiris in Britain.' There was some debate over the number of Kashmiris in the UK by a few audience members at the event. The identity campaign continued in the form of lobbying of social media sites such as Facebook for the option of identifying oneself as being from Kashmir. A Kashmir identity is a strong reason for mobilising abroad, but not all purported Kashmiris are activated. Those that are, do not reflect a homogenised

identity and have different motivations for participation and different interactions with members of the diaspora community.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the internationalization of the Kashmiri movement with emphasis on the more traditional lens of homeland politics and transnational mobilisations. Even in the context of more traditional mobilisations, however, it is clear that connections to other movements, such as with the Sikhs and Palestinians have been forged over time. The chapter first put into perspective how the Kashmir movement has gone international through a vignette about a vigil held outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh in 2013. It ends with reference to the million march in 2016, with rather polemic conditions arising from the march. In juxtaposing two young people's opinion for going or for not attending, it demonstrates that there is division in the South Asian diaspora when in connection to the perception of particular political party involvement. For the vigil, however, there was a greater diversity of campaigns standing in solidarity with one another outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh on a cold Scottish evening. The internationalization of the struggle for a free Kashmir goes beyond a homogenized diaspora. It connects disparate individuals for a unified cause, even if this is a fleeting connection. The next chapter looks more closely at this development of a transnational activism and how solidarities have formed, particularly in the case of student and university involvement and promotion.

CHAPTER 5

Transnational Activism and Movements: Identity Transformation and Solidarity

'The ideal movement strategy is one that is convincing with respect to the political authorities, legitimate with respect to potential political supporters, rewarding with respect to those already active in the movement, and novel in the eyes of the mass media. These are not entirely compatible demands...' (Rochon, 1988:109)

Among other challenges facing a transnational Kashmir movement, the challenge of competing demands arises from various members within and out-with the movement in general or with KSM in particular. Rochon (1988) quoted in the epigraph juxtaposes the dilemmas facing transnational movement activists with how it is perceived, promoted or retaliated against by the media and the government. Organizations such as KSM abroad of APDP in IAK is rather limited in its ability to use 'unconventional tactics' which may 'expose the movement to criticism or repression' (110). In IAK the ability to publicly assemble for a protest is greatly restricted. Even in other parts of India it can be dangerous to conduct protests so even less contentious forms of public protest and demonstrations may be ripe for the Army to attempt to disperse, arrests on grounds of sedition, or use of more harmful crowd control measures such as pellet guns. Youths throwing stones at security personnel shouting pro-freedom slogans is an unconventional act of protest which does garner more press, especially when there is property destruction from Molotov cocktails, for example. Marsh (1977) contributes to the quandary surrounding unconventional protest as a form of deviant behavior. He argues that protest, although a potential problem to the authorities, is not intrinsically a deviant behaviour but a 'necessary part of the democratic system' (15). Marsh purports it is not simply free people enacting their right to protest that can impact social change. He argues that the 'threat of violence' and even 'occasional outbreak[s] of violence' may lend to the credibility of those dissidents attempting to enforce social change (Marsh, 1977: 15).

Kashmir solidarity groups are located in countries where there is generally the ability to conduct peaceful protests such as the UK and Canada. An illegal protest that might be dispersed and turn into newsworthy stories such as protester retaliation or

injuries is suddenly a boring story that may not draw much attention. Unconventional tactics from solidarity groups abroad may not be seen as necessary as the target audience is India. Even holding a vigil outside the Edinburgh Indian consulate, for example, is not particularly contentious in the context of Scotland. KSM and groups like it are at once freed from the confines of immediate oppression from a government seeking to repress dissent and simultaneously finding it difficult to make big enough statements to draw in larger numbers of supporters. In this manner, KSM must both try to advocate azadi for its core constituents while focusing on narrowing in on specific concrete issues that are relatable to a broad number of potential supporters. Kashmiri freedom activists must at times tone down the calls for outright azadi or support for hero militants that defy Indian occupation if they are to bring in those that sympathize with the trauma and oppression that Kashmiris have and continue to face. This is not an easy feat when the occupation itself is blamed for setting the scene for abuses to occur. The transnational azadi movement and KSM as a representation of this abroad must negotiate between alienating potential supporters through the adoption of unconventional tactics and alienating those who support more direct action, even to the extent of supporting force against Kashmir's oppressors.

Having looked more closely at transnational mobilisation of the diaspora and some of the disagreements that can arise from homeland politics, this chapter reflects back on the traditional identity markers, but looks at these from the perspective of the contemporary Kashmiri freedom activist. Being part of a transnational movement that adopts frames of other campaigns for human rights has led to the re-negotiating or transformation of identity. This chapter argues that these individual identities have transformed in a way which permits for the saliency of group solidarities as a consequence of going international. Overarching collective identities based on feelings of subjugation has led to the possibility of linking campaigns – or bridging them in framing terms. This extends the Kashmir movement to be one which can be in solidarity with numerous other movements, especially ones which are based around minority repression.

Ethnic, National, Cultural, or Solidarity Identity?

Religious, national, ethnic, and other identities of Kashmiri freedom supporters are fluid and dynamic; and, perhaps more so because of the diversity of backgrounds and the common 'solidarity' participants have in the call to action. This, of course, does not mean that individual or even group ethnic identity does not exist. All of the Kashmiris interviewed individually claimed that being Kashmiri had a huge impact on participating in the society, as well in the decisions to help establish a wing of the society. Likewise, many of the participants involved in the KSM are involved in Islamic organizations or societies, on and off-campus. Identity markers are intertwined in relation to mobilization and cannot be analysed in isolation from other identifying qualities, namely an affiliation to unifying social or political identities. A social movements interpretation that factors in the role of identity in mobilization is a more useful tack than ethnic and national interpretations currently permit. This is a reflection of new movements which exhibit the contemporaneity of the digital and globalised age with the rhetoric and concepts that span across various geopolitical spaces and movements. In short, this chapter demonstrates the assertion that it is not ethnic, national, or religious motivations which cause someone to support azadi for Kashmir; but, it is a reinterpretation of what it means to be Kashmiri in the context of a contemporary and digital age where one is exposed to transnational movements and universalist interpretations of rights.

To reiterate some of the discussion previously on ethnonationalism, a key element to understanding ethnic nationalism theoretically and how it is used in this thesis, is the notion that the idea of nation is a constructed concept open for interpretation. This imagination of nation, with reference to Anderson (1983) infers the notion of the nation as a sovereign entity (6). If indeed the essence of an ethnic national community, however conceptualised, is that it is inherently sovereign, then it would follow that self-perceived nations would seek autonomy and independence in some fashion. Many Kashmir scholars inevitably deduce the importance of Kashmiri nationalism in mobilizing towards an independent Kashmir, often despite reasonings that attribute the turn to militancy, for example, to a 'democratic deficit,' as interpreted by Ganguly (1997) and Bose (2003). With Kashmiris supporting Scottish, Palestinian, Tibetan, and other independence movements, and with non-Kashmiri freedom supporters also supporting anti-war, anti-hate, and human rights campaigns, it would be best not to assume that ethnic/national

identities are *prima facie* when lending support to a self-determination movement. The notion of sovereignty then may extend beyond the notion of a perceived inherently sovereign ethnic community but be more representative of a perceived inherently sovereign political community. The sovereign political community representing a sovereign imagined nation, is then not limited to a singular ethnic or religious grouping but may be perceived as representing a more heterogeneous population.

What it means to be Kashmiri, and what it would mean to belong to an imagined political community named Kashmir is a malleable construction of identity left to reinterpretation. According to Snow et. al. (2013), 'social movements contribute to the alteration or reaffirmation of culture' (225). Social movement entrepreneurs may selectively choose from cultural resources that may serve to better link to their movements as the movement itself is transformed from a domestic to a transnational one. Likewise, activists may in turn reference aspects of their individual and collective identities in an effort to relate this in some way which links culture to their chosen movement participation. Different cultural elements may be fused together in a manner which revitalizes cultural elements. These emergent cultural elements are thus 'linked to and facilitated by the interpretive processes of frame articulation and elaboration' (Snow et al., 2013: 225). Frame articulation is defined by the authors as 'the process through which the elements constitutive of a frame are assembled and integrated in a meaningful fashion' (ibid.: 229). Frame elaboration, on the other hand is taking the incorporated elements and according a different value or 'weighting' to them in a sort of hierarchy of cultural elements. Elements naturally overlap and hold greater weight in some contexts than others. In this manner, social movements become 'cultural innovators.' Instead of challenging the status quo power or hegemon as social movements are often depicted as doing, Snow et al. (2013) interprets the social movement of challenging the status quo interpretations of cultural resources and symbols. For the entrepreneur, this provides a set of symbols to pool from to frame a movement in a way that is culturally resonant with a targeted audience in mind. For the individual activist, cultural symbols can be used to link perceived cultural identities with movements they support. There, is, however, a constant push and pull between perceived individual and collective identities. As identities are more abstract rather than concrete components of an individual, it is rather difficult to define or to make into a set of typologies (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). For this study, however, thematic features emerged which demonstrated these processes of frame

articulation and elaboration. Before elaborating on the more empirical findings from work with the KSM, the next section discusses how activists negotiate with their religious identity in the context of the contemporary azadi movement.

Negotiating (Religious) Cultural Identities

As a nuance of identitarian motivations for mobilisation, religious interpretations have certainly been highlighted during Kashmir's phases of militancy. Communal violence has been an unfortunate reality of South Asia as has been demonstrated in the horrors of Partition. Whether these encounters with religiously-motivated violence are explicitly due to spiritual or sectarian divides – or more so by exploitations of political entrepreneurs has always been debatable. For the purposes of this study, however, there is an assumption that religion is part of one's cultural repository and therefore an identity which may be 'reinterpreted' or reimagined as Snow et al. (2013) asserted.

Before the mass conversions to Islam during the Moghul period in Kashmir, Buddhism and variants of Hinduism were widely held beliefs across the state (Malik, 2005: 12; Chowdhary, 2010: 4). Today, the portion of Jammu and Kashmir known as Leh is dominated by the path of the Buddha, Jammu by variants Hinduism, and Kashmir by Islam. This represents only the majorities, however. Throughout the state, there is a rich diversity of adherents to Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and various sects of Islam. Spiritual and religious practices are further nuanced by the colourful diversity of cultures, languages, traditions, taboos, dress, history of ruling regimes, and more (Behera, 2006; Puri, 2010). The women of Kashmir today personify the adoption and adaptation of cultural and popular dress. Today in Kashmir, as I observed on my visit there, you can find Muslim women dressed in black burqas, university students wearing jeans and a modern hijab, or draped in colourful *shalwar kameez*. The youths of the valley like in many other places in the world enjoy some of the traditions of their ancestors, as well as cricket, rock music, Hollywood movies, Indian soap operas, and regularly use Twitter and Facebook. The embrace of the 'western' alongside their own cultural norms was something I expected from those traveling internationally, but not as much for those who have never left India during my first visit to the country. The mix of ancestral tradition and modernity is also present among second and third generation Kashmiris living abroad. Some women at meetings wear hijab; others do not. One of my respondents, though from

a 'liberal' family, discussed how her family had the tradition of arranged marriage. She claims that her mother would prefer for her to marry a Kashmiri. The young female respondent is not alone in trying to connect to her roots as a Kashmiri, keep connected with her faith, and also pursue an advanced degree in modern science. All of these identities, to her, are an important composition of her being. That being said, there is a real draw to connecting with others who share one or more of your identarian affiliations.

Seeking social ties and connections with others in their community is indeed one of the attractions Kashmiris may have for KSM. Indian, South Asian Diaspora, and Pakistan societies are all common societal affiliations in the university. Kashmir social organizations, however, are not widely represented on campuses across the United Kingdom. This is perhaps one draw to KSM movements. KSM is a place to meet Kashmiris. They don't always feel like South Asian, Indian, or Pakistani societies are a great fit. Islamic societies are a way for them to find community with others that isn't based on an ethnic or national identity. Islamic societies in particular are a great source of networking across national and ethnic divides. Beyond a source of recruitment and organizational capacity inherent in religious institutions, there is indeed the opportunity to politicize (and historical precedence of politicization) of an Islamic identity.

Thousands of Kashmiris have come to the streets in protest for political reasons, human rights infringements, and for 'attacks' on Islam. This can surely confuse the issue, as protests arising from perceivably unrelated issues can result in calls for azadi. This was the case, for instance, in response to the threat of burning a Quran by a pastor in Florida (The Irish Times, 2010). This does not mean that there is a correlation between Quran burning and Kashmiri mobilisation for freedom. 2010 was a volatile year in the Valley since the killing of Tufail Matoo and events such as these merely add fuel to the fire already burning in Kashmir. In the Channel four documentary, Parvez, a human rights lawyer, explains that his planned march on a day recognizing international torture was banned due to legislation in the state, 'They've invoked Article 144 which means five or more people cannot assemble. Under these powers if we even go outside, they will arrest us and take us to court' (Kashmir's Torture Trail, 2012). With other avenues of assembly unavailable to Kashmiris, the mosque has become a place for organization. And, especially 'after Friday prayers, demonstrations often flare up, especially around the Jamia Masjid, Srinagar's most important mosque' (ibid.). In social movement theory, '...the political opportunity perspective is that activists' prospects for advancing particular

claims, mobilizing supporters, and affecting influence are context-dependent' (Meyer, 2002: 126). For many Kashmiris, the Mosque is a prime place for networking, socializing, and community. Further, since circumstances forbid the assembly of dissidents, the mosque becomes a place of sanctuary where supporters of similar causes can voice their dissent. Frustration over lack of mobilizing opportunities during other times may make 'Islamic' issues more salient, but there is no reason to suggest that an 'Islamic' identity is the reason for mobilization. Congregating at a religious facility may simply present the *opportunity* for mobilizing.

A look into this critical dynamic can shed light on these manifestations in the transnational movement. Although Kashmiri freedom supporters in the UK are permitted to openly assemble; to hold protest marches and to raise freedom slogans, the mosque and Islamic societies continue to have a huge impact on organizing, fundraising, and for the promotion of KSM activities. For KSM Edinburgh, the campus-based Islamic society has been critical for recruitment. Although not all of the attendees of meetings or events have been involved in the Islamic Society (Isoc), the majority of those involved in KSM are either casual or regular members of the society. Many that I interviewed one-on-one claimed that they first came to hear about KSM through Isoc, including via a well-attended joint event aimed at raising awareness about Kashmir where I introduced my ongoing research, 'Kashmir not a Sweater' (4 Nov 2014).¹⁷ KSM members would often visit Isoc meetings and advertise events and try to recruit new members. Some events offer a cultural component which often relies on donations of food from halal kebab shops and the popular economical eatery, the Mosque Kitchen, located around the corner from a mosque facing the University of Edinburgh. That mosque has also played a role in giving permissions to KSM for advertising community events. The majority religion of KSM members plays a role in more banal ways, for example, by affecting the timing of meetings and events to work around evening prayer times for devotees.

The Islamic faith has had other impacts in the types of campaigns with which the KSM is involved. One of my respondents, Richard, is an organizer with Scotland Against

¹⁷ The title for the event was inspired at a KSM Edinburgh meeting whereby I offered an anecdote portraying the difficulties in disseminating my research to my sister whom when I said my research was on 'Kashmir,' her response was, 'Like the sweater?' The committee members thought this was a good analogy on how Kashmir seems to be an unknown conflict and opted to use the title 'Kashmir not a Sweater' for the event.

Criminalizing Communities (SACC). Although he only attended a couple of events with KSM Edinburgh, he has had a history of campaign work with the Muslim communities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. In the joint 'action' event between KSM and SACC, one of KSM's committee members had given an update on the situation in Kashmir which was followed by 'the planning [of] our response to the enactment of the outrageous Counter-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act and the extension of the Prevent programme' to be enforced in Scotland.' Richard reported that the legislation, meant to prevent terrorism, 'unjustly targets minority communities and lends itself to an increase, rather than a decrease in radicalization among targeted communities.'

Identity framing becomes particularly important for re-interpreting the Kashmiri conflict to reflect a progressive vision of a more democratic Kashmir that both provides sanctions for the Muslim majority but that simultaneously calls for a secular acceptance of all other religions. Sometimes this is based on a common conception of who is a Kashmiri, whereby it is reflected in the literature, online, and as one of my young Kashmiri respondents claimed, 'We don't want Pandits or Sikh to leave - they are Kashmiris like us'. Support for an independent Kashmir goes beyond connections based on faith alone, especially where it is pertinent to a particular argument or brought about in a particular context. During a rally against Islamophobia, someone may strongly identify with their Muslim brethren, but when faced with evidence of human rights abuses by Chinese soldiers of Tibetans, they form a different sort of bond based on the perceived similarities in their struggles.

Collective Identities of Oppression and Subaltern Solidarity

Cockell (2000) reflects on a nuanced version of subaltern studies' theory, describing how an ethnonational 'subaltern' identity has developed due to a shared experience of subjugation. Cockell argues that the Kashmiri ethno-nationalist movement has been fuelled not only by an historical affiliation with an ethnic or religious group, but through historic oppression of the group. Zutshi (2004), in turn, argues that the oft-quoted *Kashmiriyat* (or Kashmiri-ness) was a link to a Kashmiri identity that was politicized and used in mobilizing the people only around the time of Partition, during a period where other groups tried to claim their own independent state from Pakistan and India. Post-

Partition grievances and the perception of Kashmiris as a subaltern, oppressed people could have certainly assisted in the engineering of an ethno-nationalist movement. As Cockell (2000) and Zutshi (2004) assert, a sustained period of subjugation of Kashmiris may have led to an increase in a collective subaltern consciousness. An appeal to a subjugated subaltern identity is a uniquely salient feature of the Kashmir freedom movement that carries the potential to draw in an extended support base. Even without explicitly or consciously extending the frame to incorporate other disaffected minorities, people have been attracted to the Kashmir freedom movement through a shared sense of subjugation. One respondent, a Christian whose parents came from the subcontinent claims that he was attracted to KSM because of his own family's experience of suffering as a minority religion in India. This clearly suggests that there exists the potential for a space to come together along these grounds. It is a tenuous link, however. The same respondent that was attracted to the KSM as a historically oppressed religious minority felt that there was little space to be heard as a non-Muslim. This could be presented as a distinction between the KSM SOAS and Scotland groups. Although the majority in attendance was indeed Muslim, there were other regular members who were not.

In addition to appealing to other subjugated religious minorities, there also lies the potential to extend the frame to those who identified as a subjugated 'other.' This was most apparent at the joint KSM SOAS event 'We Need to talk about Modi.' At this event, the situation of minority castes was highlighted. Modi, whose picture was placed adjacent to that of Hitler, was depicted much as he was described by the crowd: as a racist, fascist, and ultra-right-wing Hindutva force clearly at odds with a subaltern underclass in India. The hatred against Modi extended beyond the highlighted topic of his purported guilt as a perpetrator of the Gujarat riots which implicitly places a Muslim community at odds with the Prime Minister, to his guilt as someone who spreads the doctrine of a Hindu supremacy in India. Being opposed to Hindutva or to a perceived elite caste¹⁸ does not necessarily pit Muslims against Hindus. During the event 'We Need to talk about Modi,' the subject of caste and the perceived continued oppression and prejudice by the elite of the Dalit communities were highlighted. In particular, the oppression of Muslims as a

¹⁸ Although there are generally accepted hierarchies of caste as explored by Dumont (1966), other more nuanced versions of caste hierarchy are asserted by Gupta (2000) for example. Therefore, business classes, such as is the case in Narendra Modi's background in Gujarat may be considered elite or 'high' on a perceived hierarchy, as a Brahmin may in other regions.

minority, underrepresented community in India was a point of reference for those of underrepresented 'backwards' castes. The linkages between the causes were quite clear for the audience in attendance, although there were a few Modi supporters who dissented with this conclusion.

The highlight of the event was, perhaps, the showing of a YouTube video, aiming to offer proof of Modi's support and involvement in instigating the Gujarat attacks on Muslims. It is of poor quality and shows a few people apparently close to Modi who praised Modi for giving the 'Hindus' and BJP a 'free hand to act for three days' without prosecution or detention (The Viral Videos, 2014). The video is framed as a sort of sting operation with a hidden camera and someone interviewing the people. The video, 'Compelling Evidence proves – Narendra Modi Ordered Gujarat Riots 2002,' has over 200,000 views on YouTube (The Viral Videos, 2014).¹⁹

The event, officially hosted by the South Asian Diaspora Society at SOAS was also featured in the *SOAS Spirit*, the school newspaper. Pandya summarizes the nature of the queries asked about 'gender violence, neo-liberalism, Islamophobia, casteism, occupation, and the role of the Indian diaspora in supporting Hindu supremacism and countering it' (2015). The event highlighted these topics which remain prominent in social media discourse via shared posts and links to news stories, blogs, and articles. One thing that was picked up in the paper was a reflection on the way discussants were keen to change the dialogue, but that they found it difficult to engage in the discussion or for their voices to be heard. This sort of discourse is omnipresent when engaging an extended audience.

Modi's visits are highlighted in the news articles and his program for a 'digital India,' has been hailed as a sort of harbinger of technology to the masses by way of making it easier for those living in rural communities to access the Internet and government services. The move seems contradictory to the practice of disabling internet and SMS services to parts of India experiencing protest for fear of 'spreading propaganda.' Text messaging in Kashmir has been banned and there are frequent citations of social media 'watchdogs' seeking to end the online calls for separatism. This is among a larger frame in India and in Kashmir for intimidating the media into 'spun'

¹⁹ It is undetermined how many views it had at that time; however, as of September 2016, it has over 200,000 views.

versions of the news, as has been suggested by interviews with several journalists in a May 2013 visit to Kashmir, and highlighted in numerous personal interviews of KSM respondents, as well as echoed in popular literature on Kashmir such as Ali et al. (2011) *Kashmir's Case for Freedom*. The case for spinning or altering news stories to make them suitable for publishing in India is regarded as the only way to publish anything in a country that Reporters without Borders ranked 140th out of 180 countries for free speech (Muzzling Speech in India, 2014). As one senior journalist of a major news outlet in Kashmir reported to me during a visit to Srinagar in 2013, it is very difficult to be an independent media source in Kashmir. He reported that Indian authorities are constantly monitoring 'independent' news sources and offered anecdotal evidence of being spied on. He recalled that after receiving a phone call originating in America, his home was ransacked and burned, presumably for fear of spreading 'propaganda' to foreign news agencies. With documented restrictions on news outlets in Kashmir and with reports of 'self-censoring' of news in Kashmir to avoid harassment, social media becomes a crucial medium for organizing and for getting news for Kashmiris inside and outside of India. After some Facebook profiles were suspended for purportedly 'glorifying terrorism,' and with a newspaper ban across the Valley for three days, activists turned to Twitter.

Freedom of speech has been one of the more unifying causes among students, academics, and others who feel like they do not have a voice in today's India. A case regarding the detention and hanging of Afzal Guru exemplified the pitfalls of the Indian legal process. Afzal was convicted of being an accomplice in the attack on Indian Parliament in 2001. There was no doubt in the evidence found that linked him suspiciously to the terrorists through material support and being in continuous contact with them, however, as Roy (2013) reports this evidence is rather dubious at best and probably fabricated. Although the nature of his links to those involved have been a matter of debate, the real controversy was over his access to legal representation while incarcerated, the dubious appeals process, and the conditions of his sentence being carried out early in the morning, without his legal representative or family being made aware (Live Law News Network, 2014). Human rights lawyer, Nandita Haksar has spoken out against the death sentence of Afzal Guru being carried out. She warned that it would set an unwanted precedent of securing 'justice' in a way that emboldens Hindu nationalists and strengthens authoritarianism in India (2006). Haksar further purports that the execution of Afzal Guru would only serve to disrupt the peace process in Kashmir

(ibid). All of these points have served to be true if the response to the hanging by azadi activists and the retaliation to protests are indicators.

As is a sort of standard operating procedure for any kind of events that can pre-empt protest in Kashmir, the valley went into lockdown with no access to the internet, mobile service suspended, and curfews in place for several days after – as well as on the anniversary of the date since. SAR Geelani, also arrested in connection with the parliament attacks but later acquitted and released was again arrested this past year (February 2016) after his role in arranging protests at JNU on the anniversary of the hanging of Afzal Guru. He and others, including the student union leader, were arrested on charges of sedition, prompting further protests over the arrests of the students and the Delhi University lecturer (Daniyal, 2016). The arrests amplify the case that anyone, even university professors or students, that speak out on behalf of Kashmir will be charged with sedition. The showing of solidarity of university students in India was met with support transnationally. With the whole process being publicized on Twitter, the incident spurred on more protests across Delhi and Srinagar and activated academics (especially those with departmental affiliations with India). Perhaps the pressure from not just within India, but from outside academics may have spurred the release of many of the students affiliated with the arrest.

The timing of the JNU protests and arrests coincided with KSM SOAS's 'Kashmir Awareness Week' (London, 2016) and were widely referenced during meetings and events during that time and there was heightened internet activity during that time. Ironically, the JNU issue online was framed more as a freedom of speech issue than in connection to Kashmiri freedom. In a sample of over 400 tweets with the hashtag #standwithjnu, Kashmir was specifically mentioned fewer than 20 times, and the result was skewed because Kashmir was in the username. There was, however, a show of 'solidarity' from academics and students from Brown University, Cornell, the University of Hawaii, St. Joseph's College of Bangalore, Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), Princeton, Exeter, and Oxford. As this is a sample, it is not an exhaustive list; however, it is clear that regardless of one's stance on a territorial resolution, an international academic community will take up the fight against the perceived silencing of speech. A stand in solidarity with Kashmir, therefore, is a loaded statement that can mean many different things from the perspective of those claiming this view.

Student and academic solidarity has been expressed in response to what has been largely argued to be a return to heavy-handed tactics by Indian security forces against protesting civilians, arguably perceived to be a repeat of Kashmir's 'summer of unrest' of 2010. On 8 July 2016, Burhan Wani, the popular militant commander of the Hizb-ul Mujahedin (HM) was killed in a crackdown of militant-related activity by Indian security forces. The group, rather than target civilians, targets Indian security forces; thus, acting more like a rebel group than a terrorist organization. It was actually unclear whether or not Wani, a social media publicist, was actually involved in violence. After his death, there was a massive gathering in Kashmir, rallying around who was considered to be a fallen martyr. The death also sparked protests across the Valley, resulting in many injuries by pellet guns and casualties, purportedly at the hands of the Indian security forces (BBC, 2016). As an act of protest and to pay respects for the fallen Wani and, arguably those civilian Kashmiris who were injured or killed whilst protesting his death, many changed their profile photos on Facebook to Wani. Claiming to be glorifying terrorism, Facebook took down the profiles of these people. Others, who posted images with the intention of raising discussions regarding security force backlash against protests, including several academics such as Dibyesh Anand of the University of Westminster and Huma Dar, an academic in California, were equally censored. News of Facebook profile blocking was shared on Twitter, and as purported in a Tweet by Nitasha Kaul of the University of Westminster, a frequent guest speaker at KSM and other Kashmir-related events, Facebook's act of censorship is 'condemnable.' In her Tweet, she links to a *Guardian* article that reports 'Dibyesh Anand, an academic at the University of Westminster, had his posts removed, and was blocked from using Facebook for 24 hours twice after he posted about Wani's death' (Doshi, 2016). Although some of these actions were later recanted by Facebook, administrators confirmed the reasons behind the actions in a statement which claims 'We welcome discussions on [the subject of terrorism] but any terrorist content has to be clearly put in context which condemns these organizations and their violent activities' (ibid.). Discourses on terrorism as an unforgiveable evil is often revisited at events and often juxtaposed with state-sponsored terrorism of the Indian state. For a rather large segment of the azadi movement which has become rather clear after Wani's death was that many activists view Wani as a freedom fighter against an occupying force, and that occupying force as the terrorist organization.

In death, Wani had a hero's funeral which attracted large numbers of mourners. The mass gathering of people – as they often do in Kashmir – led to a renewed cycle of protests against the Indian security forces and the subsequent calls for azadi led security forces stationed in Kashmir to be summoned for crowd control. According to a letter distributed on social media networks, 'since the 8th of July...[m]ore than 50 people have been killed on the pretext of crowd control,' and more 'than 100 eye surgeries have been performed,' due to the use of "non-lethal pellet guns" (Scroll.in, 2016). The link to the site where activists can sign the petition can be found on the KSM SOAS Facebook page, who proudly announces that:

'Solidarity is building from both within and beyond India. The solidarity letter for Kashmir and Kashmiris was signed by over 800 people, including Prof. Noam Chomsky, Mirza Waheed, Nitasha Kaul, Kamila Shamsie, Basharat Peer, Prof. Dibyesh Anand and Dr. Goldie Osuri' (July 2016).

The listing of prominent writers and academics lends credibility to the azadi movement through raising awareness of the abuses of security personnel who have been authorized to use pellet guns for crowd dispersal. Although protests were initially sparked by Wani, the pellet guns used in retaliation to an unarmed crowd of dissidents marks the ever-growing reality that today's azadi movement is not a terrorist threat. Academics and activists which have spoken out against abuses in solidarity was lacking during the time of the insurgency when it was clear that militants were targeting civilians and it was widely accepted that Pakistan's intelligence agency played a role in funding and arming militant groups (Mahmud, 2012). Support for Burhan Wani may be perceived as support for a terrorist if he is portrayed as such in particular media; however, Wani was viewed instead as a hero by azadi activists who resisted Indian occupation.

Solidarity and Mobilizing around Minority

The demographics of the KSM reflect a diverse community, and thus the bonds that unite one another may be based on a sense of solidarity in terms of being on the same team for a campaign or cause. Often this solidarity is inextricably linked to the university. There is a great sense of student solidarity that is experienced and seems to span across ethnic, national, or religious divides. It is widely publicized on online forums when there is a student protest on behalf of Kashmiris, whether in Kashmir or Delhi and there is often subsequent calls to action. Many respondents said they get most of their news about

Kashmir or first came to know about the KSM from Facebook or being sent a link on a social media platform or an invite to an event on Facebook. Since many are used to getting their news and updates on Kashmir this way, whenever there is a media blackout it is also widely publicized. This further results in an increasing number of blogs and independent news sites on Kashmir.

Transnational mobilization for KSM and affiliated causes are assisted by the transient nature of participants. Many of the students from IAK for KSM Edinburgh and SOAS are often visiting students or on short-term (and some longer-term) degree courses. Some of the students are on a one or two-year program in the UK. This transient nature has surely impacted the society. On the one hand, the students are drawn together because they are seeking to socialize and look for a community outside of their courses, sometimes for personal as well as professional networking purposes. On the other hand, they may be eager to engage in political activities they felt were difficult to access back home, due to the relative freedom they experience in the UK compared to India. Many from the Indian-held territories have never encountered Kashmiris from the Pakistani side, and they use their time in the UK to connect to their 'lost kin.'

Acting as a united voice for students in the UK with an interest in the Kashmir conflict, the Kashmir Students Campaign UK often bridge the frames between student rights, freedom of speech and the Kashmir freedom campaign. On its Facebook page, the group denounces the UK's former Home Secretary and current Prime Minister Theresa May's 'threatening to kick out international students.' Although the posted article does not reference policy on students studying in the UK on a visa, the group makes the connection between stricter limitations on international students and the purported xenophobic quality of discourse used by politicians and found in documents on the promotion of 'British values' and frameworks on 'integration,' (*New Statesman*, 2014). The perceived attack on minorities in the UK and the heightened discourse on xenophobia that surrounds anti-terror legislation such as Prevent are frequently relatable issues to the student activist. Arguably, the insecurities felt by legislation targeting international students is felt by minority and non-minority groups alike but, perhaps it is further exasperating for a non-white community. The framings of these issues and integration of these topics into a larger discourse on a free Kashmir is a tenuous, albeit tenable position as they are representative of the many values and concerns of student

and minority life in the UK. The group's aim is to encourage grassroots activism, but they do this through the lens of not just their Kashmiri identity but as expressed through their identity as an 'other' in the UK.

The Kashmir Students Campaign UK wrote in a post, dated 18 July 2014:

'Welcome to the UK Kashmiri Students campaign. Around 70% of British Pakistanis are from Kashmir²⁰, there is also a small but significant amount of Kashmiri's [sic] from the Indian side who live in the UK, or who come to the UK to study. This campaign is to highlight the issues of Kashmiris in the UK affecting their homeland and themselves, and to engage with their campuses and wider communities, in grass-roots activism'

The Kashmir Students Campaign UK hosts a publicly accessible Facebook site whereby it posts and shares articles as well as events co-sponsored or sponsored by individual Kashmir societies across the UK, namely KSM SOAS, Scotland, the newly-created Kings College London (KCL) KSM, and the University of Birmingham's Kashmir Awareness Society. Shortly after the initial post, acting as a call for Kashmiris in the diaspora to unite, the group shared *Kashmir Monitor's* post about a 15-year old who was 'shot dead in India-occupied Kashmir for protesting against Israel imperialism' (21 July 2014). It is quite common on these sites and for individual activists to promote peripheral causes or campaign they see as relevant to their own. It is an effort to on the one hand, express solidarity and to support someone else's cause and on the other hand to promote awareness in one's own cause and participation in one's events. Again, highlighting the group's apparent commitment to minority rights and subaltern causes, on its fourth day of existence the group expressed its solidarity with other non-white peoples. On 22 July 2014, the group posted the following comment:

'ONLY 85 out of nearly 20,000 professors in the UK are Black, A similar number are from South Asian backgrounds, I wonder how many professors are Kashmiri? These numbers are disproportionate considering our population in the UK...So it is not correct to say we don't go to university and...there aren't many professors like us, there is no intellectual deficiency here. The other day we participated in a video shoot called 'why isn't my professor black'

[Song Lyrics]

This statistic is taken from a chapter in an academic text, Sokefeld, M. and Bolognani, M. (2011) 'Kashmiris in Britain: A Political Project or a Social Reality?' These statistics are widely publicized and used in everyday parlance by activists.

Aspiration formation lost in the corridors of higher education, absent concepts of our own disrupted identity - our cultural construct given no real validity. Galton's theories, small brains and low IQ's, presented as fact - meaning we can't challenge these views. We're talking about education and having ability – specifically academia, seems like you gotta be nobility...

[Chorus]

Just 85 professors in nearly 20 thousand
The stats don't lie they're so profound and
So why is it - my professor isn't black?
Let's open the debate – and start to change that...'



Figure 5:1: Kashmir Student Campaign UK show solidarity with minority rights movement

In less than one week from the initial post of the group, which suggests the activation of the UK Kashmiri diaspora, the group expanded its frame to reflect upon solidarity with Palestinian resistance and upon minority representation in the UK at higher education institutions. The song lyrics, above, have been shortened, but they also include reference to structured inequalities present in the UK, which is often implied in much resistance dialogue found in academic literature as well as by activists participating in campaigns for equality. On the one hand, the KSM groups wish to raise awareness about the plight of Kashmiris; on the other hand, they wish to stand in solidarity with other perceived injustices. In this sense, the network expands, as well as the inclusivity of what may otherwise be perceived as an ethnonational or homogenous movement. 'We Kashmiris' include 'we the minority,' 'we the underrepresented,' 'we the downtrodden masses,' etc. The focal point of the groups remains Kashmir-centric, with most of the posts directly relating to Kashmir. However, the connections are often made between Palestine and other freedom movements such as for an independent Kurdish or Scottish state and

Kashmir's azadi movement. Other movements or campaigns are constantly made of relevance or significance to the Kashmir cause. Further, there is reflection upon other campaigns' support for Kashmir independence. Taken from a post on 18 September 2014, Kashmir Students Campaign UK shares these thoughts:

'Yesterday there was a great turnout at the #YesHope, around 3,000 people attended this Edinburgh gathering. We're all part of something historical here! People from various countries showing their solidarity. VP for KSM got to speak about Kashmir and our own struggle for independence, it was amazing to have the audience chant along at the end Kashmir's famous slogan: Hum kya chaahte? Azaaaadi – We want freedom!!!

So many people expressed their solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Hope over fear. Our dear brothers and sisters in Kashmir know that you are not forgotten
#ScotlandstandswithKashmir
Kashmir says YES!
#VoteYes
18/09/2014'

Hum kye chaate? Azadi! Is translated to 'What do we want? Freedom!' It's the slogan most often shouted at protests within and outside of Kashmir and can be heard chanted at events and meetings. Further, it is an overwhelming sense of pride when a non-Kashmiri chants it, as in my own first-hand experience. Repeating the words of freedom in the local tongue makes someone 'part-Kashmiri.' Getting a crowd of non-Kashmiris in Scotland to pick up the chant would be an unquantifiable source of pride for KSM.

Conclusion

This chapter looks more into how Kashmir freedom activists link to other campaign in a show of solidarity, which naturally leads to the reciprocity of solidarity with Kashmiris in their struggle against occupation. There are instances where non-Kashmiris identify with the Kashmir freedom movement due to a shared sense of being an 'other' – a subaltern, minority, displaced person, or promoting what may be perceived as a similar cause for self-determination. There are also clear correlations between developments in the homeland in the contemporary azadi movement. However, it is not solely Kashmiri political developments that impact discourse on the transnational movement. Diverse identities may become salient in response to one's environment, exposure to and

collaboration with many other campaigns, societies, and causes. This has thus likely contributed to the evolution of the Kashmiri freedom movement. There is a wide reach of student activists from various universities and backgrounds. There is a lot of South Asian involvement, as highlighted by the collaboration activities of KSM with Pakistan and South Asian and Diaspora societies; however, it is certainly not limited to South Asian involvement. Student solidarity finds many linkages. From black power movements of the 1970s to #blacklivesmatters movements of today, KSM members have not only internalized the feelings of being part of a minority group, but they have developed strategies and tactics of such groups, including reflecting upon these feelings in the wordings of and relation to these movements. Other anti-Indian and anti-imperialist movements have had a significant impact on the KSM. They have channelled the indignations of other campaigns and have been adopting this language of 'occupation' and 'imperialism' for some time. Racial linkages are common, with KSM Edinburgh, for example, participating in Black History Month events on campus. These movements are often highlighted in shared articles on the groups' Facebook sites. Respondents have been involved in anti-racial campaigns such as in response to the Ferguson, Missouri police shooting of an unarmed black man. After the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom led to the purported rise in racism across parts of England, articles and links to articles have flooded the walls of Facebook users connecting to their minority status, with #kashmirilivesmatter becoming an increasingly common hashtag among Kashmiri freedom activists. There is a constant engagement between causes and campaigns that, perhaps, is more so conducive due to the way in which student societies operate; and, the way that these issues are highlighted and connected in very global ways.

CHAPTER 6

KSM Edinburgh: Origin, Participants, and Core Issues

‘We stand in solidarity with the Kashmiri people. We aim to raise awareness of their struggles and of the occupation of Kashmir. Everyone welcome!’ (KSM Edinburgh, 2012)

The phenomena of globalizing a social movement almost inherently widens the circle of potential participants. For Kashmir, although the globalization of the post-insurgency movement really had its footing in the massive protests of 2008 and 2010, these events only became crucial to the internationalization of the Kashmiri movement after the release of BBC’s documentary *Kashmir’s Torture Trail* in 2012. Although scores of reports and books portray the human rights abuses and widespread torture of Indian Kashmiris, this documentary gave easy access to credible information regarding the situation. The screening of this documentary led to the formation of KSM Edinburgh in September 2012.

The KSM is an open group of activists of varying levels of interest and a plurality of motivations for involvement. The group formed in October 2012 and shortly afterwards became an official student society affiliated with the University of Edinburgh. Although the society is no longer active as of 2019, KSM Edinburgh members have helped to facilitate the opening of other societies associated with universities in the United Kingdom with links to KSM SOAS, established in 2015. KSM SOAS member then assisted with the creation of the Kings College London (KCL) division in 2016. I am aware of KSM societies in the United States and Canada but do not know how direct these links are. KSM affiliates have attracted students, sympathetic members of the public, and general activists involved in other movements.

This chapter introduces KSM in general but will focus on Kashmir Solidarity Movement Edinburgh which was active between 2012 and 2017. KSM SOAS, which formed in 2015 and continues to be active in 2019 will be discussed more in depth in the following chapter. More specifically, I discuss the groups in chronological order of fieldwork. As my 2013 visit to Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) was brief, these conversations and encounters are drawn out in other chapters. In 2014 and 2015 while being based in Edinburgh, I regularly attended meetings and events and conducted more formal semi-structured interviews with participants. My journey with KSM, however,

began in October 2012 at that first documentary viewing and therefore reflections from piloting the research are also included in this chapter on KSM Edinburgh. The periods of 2015 and 2016 fieldwork in London are the focus of the chapter which follows on KSM SOAS.

KSM Edinburgh: Origin

I began attending meetings of the KSM since its inaugural showing of the documentary. Afterwards, I continued to actively participate and observe, piloting several interviews and fieldwork observations for research methodology courses. I have drawn from a sample of meetings and events since September 2012, but specifically targeted the period between January 2015 and May 2015 for one-on-one interviews with activists. The activists ranged from those attending twice over the course of a few months to those more active for a longer duration including committee members. The demographics, as outlined previously, were a mixture of Kashmiri, other Asian, and non-Asian ethnicities and have been active in a variety of causes besides KSM. The groups conduct regularly scheduled planning committee meetings and holds events aimed at raising awareness such as documentary screenings, vigils, and somewhat more 'culturally-centered' events with food and poetry. The group also sends drafts letters to government officials, press releases, updates their Facebook page, and encouraged delegates to attend activist 'training' sessions and seminars for better efficacy as well as networking opportunities. The primary strategic goal of KSM appears to be raising awareness about the Kashmir issue and appears to devote much of its budget to that effect.

One of the first major events of KSM Edinburgh after its inauguration was the holding of a vigil outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh commemorating Kashmir Solidary Day, observed on 5 February in Pakistan and by Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC and abroad. In anticipation of the event, there was a lot of advertisement both at the meetings of KSM Edinburgh as well as liaising with other groups who came along to support the Kashmiri freedom cause, but also to promote their own campaigns. A week before the vigil a planning meeting took place that, I feel, would be rather indicative of the groups' strategies. The first contact for the group was the local mosque in Edinburgh which is adjacent to the main campus of the University of Edinburgh. The mosque permitted the group to put up posters inside as well as permitted for the announcement

of the vigil after Friday prayers and the distribution of leaflets. Some of the other items on the agenda was the need to print out the banner 'End the Occupation' (held in figure 6:2), confirm speakers, and a chair for the event which would be held outside with the assistance of a megaphone. In addition to these routine activities, they also discussed the statement that would be handed to the Indian consulate the day of the vigil as well as the content of the press releases, which it was argued would need to be very short. Complaints were raised at the meeting regarding the lack of response from MSPs (members of the Scottish Parliament) to take on a motion regarding the mistreatment of Kashmiris in IAK. None acknowledged receiving the request. A member of the European Parliament, however, had expressed sympathy for Kashmir and thus could be a potential connection for the group, they had surmised.

The remainder of the meeting was going over details of who was bringing this or that on to ensure that there was enough publicity and people to show support for the Kashmir cause. To this end, they discussed how members of the Kashmir community in Glasgow were being bussed in, and how they had reached out to the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) for their support and attendance. It was also at this meeting with the core participants that I made myself known as a researcher conducting, at the time, a pilot study. At the end of the meeting, as normally happened, was the advertisement of future events and meetings with the group such as a movie screening, poetry reading event, and the promotion of an Islamic Society (iSoc) event the following week. Lastly, there were discussions on potential events celebrating International Women's Day which would connect issues of sexual violence in Kashmir with the New Delhi gang rape which spurred discussions on combating sexual violence in India. This last feature of the discussion would prove to be a very powerful rallying point for the case of human rights in Kashmir. In attempts to spread the network that KSM works with wider, themes of Islam or connections with the Islamic society or the mosque tended to be confined to the meetings. What was focused on in more diverse forms were discussions on human rights, which included themes of demilitarization, resisting occupation, and resistance to security forces torturing and sexually assaulting Kashmiri civilians.

Handed out on business-sized slips of paper to advertise the vigil relayed what a rather simple but acute message:

Torture & Rape in Kashmir

Tuesday, 5th February is

Kashmir Solidarity Day

Kashmir Solidarity Movement will be holding a

vigil/demo outside the Indian Consulate

Protesting 63 years of occupation by India & its human
rights abuses; torture of Kashmiri[sic]s & rape being used as
a weapon of war against women.

Indian Consulate

17 Rutland Sq, Edin EH1 2BB

Tuesday 5th February at

4:30-6:00pm. Speeches 5:30pm to 6pm

This rather simplistic advertisement, I assert, gave early indication of the direction the KSM would like to go, and perhaps more importantly, demonstrate how it would like to be perceived by non-Kashmiris. The very first lines of this vigil which would be host to such a wide variety of interest groups immediately places the Kashmir conflict within a human rights frame. 'Torture and Rape in Kashmir' does not immediately suggest a link to a movement aligning itself with any primordial identity claims. As discussed previously in reflection on Snow and Benford (1997; 2000) the card is using the human rights frame as a frame alignment tactic to the proposed self-determination groups but also as a frame bridging tactic which frames the Kashmir cause as also a cause for ending occupation and demilitarization which can bridge the framing tactics to Stop the War Coalition in attendance.

Despite being a typical wintry Scottish day in February, there was a fantastic turnout for the vigil. I arrived shortly after the gathering start time and well before the speakers began so I assisted with lighting candles by the posters of those who have lost

their lives in Kashmir. The main point of the vigil seemed to be remembering those that have lost their lives or disappeared under Indian occupation. There were also plenty of placards which were premade and readily available to hold while standing outside the consulate with more political messages of resistance. The messages on the placards (Figure 6:1) were focused on how an Indian occupation has enabled the torture and abuse of Kashmiris, leading to the deaths of thousands, which a particular emphasis on the young people that have lost their lives in recent demonstrations in the summer of 2010. They call for demilitarization and freedom but also aim to educate people less familiar with the freedom struggle as to why freedom was so important to Kashmiris.



Figure 6:1: Pre-made placards for KSM vigil outside Indian consulate in Edinburgh 5 February 2013

The vigil was attended by more than just Kashmiris and South Asians in Edinburgh or bussed in from Glasgow (See Figure 6:2). Present were those in support of a free Scotland, anti-war coalitions, and other interested groups who saw the case of Kashmir as at least an affiliated movement for freedom or ending war or occupation that they could align with.



Figure 6:2 Photo of the vigil outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh 5 Feb 2013

KSM Edinburgh had gotten off to a great start. The meetings were regularly attended by not only a core group of Kashmiri nationals and immigrants but also human rights activists from other parts of South Asia and beyond. The photo of the vigil landed on the group's Facebook and Twitter page as the first introduction to the world who and what KSM is. KSM was not such Kashmiris or South Asians and KSM was not simply meant as an identitarian movement. KSM was meant to be a cause that anyone could rally behind. One of the best demonstrations of this was a campaign advertised in June 2013 – the time that this screenshot above (figure 6:2) was taken. Less than a year in operation and this small pro-Kashmiri freedom group in Scotland had almost 300 followers. Not only did KSM take advantage of that but other groups were continuing to advertise on the Facebook site.

A young woman that would become affiliated with the KSM SOAS division conducted a digital campaign that evolved from a school project to create a video using images from all over the world of people supporting Kashmir's cause for freedom from Indian occupation. Members of KSM Edinburgh gathered on Edinburgh's popular Calton Hill which offers a stunning backdrop of the Scottish city. I assisted with taking pictures

of the group holding a banner and a flag of Azad Kashmir, but refrained from being included in the photos myself as I had a pending visit to India.

The final product 'We are Kashmir' (Mahmoud, 2013) was placed on YouTube later that summer (2013) and was widely distributed. The campaign was well-received by supporters across the globe and was exemplary for the extension of the Kashmiri freedom movement to those outside of Kashmir. The YouTube video, which has gone viral, depicts people holding up signs saying 'Free Kashmir,' or 'You will be free.' Signs and slogans often involve 'End the (Indian) occupation.' A few signs further read, 'Remembrance is resistance.' The project involved sending out requests to groups and



Figure 6:3 Link to article promoting *We are Kashmir* video

individuals who supported the Kashmir freedom movement all over the globe. As usual, the key was to have the request extend to as many places as possible to encourage a wide array of participants but it was also an effort to develop what could turn out to be a positive promotional piece.

The screenshot (figure 6:3) shows a sole man holding a sign urging for the end of Indian occupation in Kashmir. He is standing outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the United States Declaration of Independence was signed, demonstrating solidarity in the desire for self-determination as well as signaling that non-South Asian communities also care about Kashmiris. The response overall was rather

demographically diverse, with people holding up signs in pictures from cities in England, Scotland, Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Azad Kashmir, Poonch District, Jordan, Gaza, and Afghanistan. One of the messages from Poonch, a district that straddles the LoC is, 'No one can divide us.' From Gaza, young children hold up colourful signs alleging that Gaza stands with Kashmir. In Azad Kashmir, a sign claims 'We want freedom,' in addition to a message comparing Indian-held 'Curfewed Kashmir' to 'Gitmo,' the controversial US detention centre in Cuba, Guantanamo Bay. Below a poster board with some statistics on Kashmir can be found the hashtags #Viva La Azadi and #Viva La Kashmir. In one five-minute video, it is depicted that the Kashmir issue is a concern for everyone in the world. The title, 'We are Kashmir,' says it all. The campaigners want to express solidarity with other movements and want others to relate to the Kashmir issue, using populist references and universal rallying cries.

Core Issues and Strategies: Framing Human Rights

One of the best ways to demonstrate the strategies of framing the Kashmir movement in terms of human rights is by looking more closely at the strategies explored for promoting the group during its meetings. Many of the meetings at either site may only have a fraction of those who attend larger scale events; however, the more administrative devices can be seen. From proposing speakers and movie screenings to the number of flyers used in distribution and the locations for promoting events are discussed at meetings. Many of these conversations happen with the intention of finding a way to bring in more members and raising the group's profile. Quite a lot of time is spent in weekly or bi-weekly smaller meetings on organizing, preparing events, and expressing goals for the group. There is quite a lot of nuanced micro-activity regarding where to put up flyers, posters, what size they should be, and if they should be in colour or black and white. The number one goal for both Edinburgh and SOAS KSM was in raising awareness and the discussions revolved around how they would do that the best. These discussions involved asking which film to show or if they can attract a speaker that will draw in a big crowd. Drawing in larger crowds was always a concern for Edinburgh KSM so if they were to show strength in numbers, the events would normally have to be in collaboration with other,

bigger societies. The smallest event I attended only drew in two people other than myself and the organizers, which was a showing of the Kashmir movie, *Valley of Saints* (2012).

KSM Edinburgh regularly stressed the importance of being a presence at key societies they could collaborate with, whether through affiliation as a society representing a minority, human rights, or self-determination. This meant alignment with societies as different as the Islamic Society, the Marxist society, the feminist society, Students for Justice in Palestine, and the Tibet society. At the first regular meeting in 2013, committee members discussed the following major topics:

- Film screening suggestions
- Collaborations with other South Asian societies
- Collaborations with the Islamic society
- Collaborations with all the solidarity groups with specific mention to have a regular presence at the society for Tibet, Students for Justice with Palestine, and Amnesty International
- Funding for the group, especially funding for speakers
- Inviting speakers that will draw a crowd, whether popular academics or activists
- Possibly taking part in the World Justice Festival

As this was the start of year, this meeting would set the tone for the following year. The meeting also reflected regular participants and attitudes towards other societies. The meeting further raised questions about the suitability of particular groups at advancing their cause. For this particular meeting, someone questioned whether or not the Pakistan Society might be too 'stuck up' to collaborate with Kashmiris. Although the KSM made an attempt to collaborate with the South Asian Students Association (SASA), they reflected not being very welcomed at meetings, citing that it was 'mostly Indians' on one occasion and on others that it was 'more of a party society.' The ambivalence for the Pakistan Society, PakSoc was removed as more collaborations took place over the years I spent with KSM Edinburgh. The society with perhaps the most impact, even despite not always collaborating with KSM, was Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), or the Palestinian solidarity movements more generally. At one of the very first meetings of KSM Edinburgh in January 2013, a committee member suggested 'plastering posters with facts and figures' as 'SJP does around campus.' Tactics of SJP were reiterated frequently. At a planning meeting in September 2014 for an October event meant to both raise money for

floods in Kashmir as well as promote awareness about the struggles of Kashmiris, a young woman who had been active in SJP had suggested selling cheap badges as a means to raise money with the Kashmir flag which states 'Free Kashmir.'

Again, mimicking a tactic of SJP, committee members at a meeting later in the semester sought to pass a resolution at Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA) to 'be in solidarity with Kashmir.' Although no specific action would be taken against India, the motion would 'officially' condemn the actions of India by EUSA and, perhaps more importantly, require a vote by the student council which comprises of representatives from every school in the university. This would serve more to raise awareness of the Kashmir cause, and again frame violations against the Kashmir people as human rights violations. Figure 6:4 utilizes several tactics adopted and adapted by



Figure 6:4 Flyer advertising direct action by KSM Edinburgh

KSM in order to advertise a protest on the symbolic Kashmir 'Black Day.' Flyers such as this and others make use of 'facts and figures' to show the gravity of the situation in Kashmir. Note, that this flyer does not specifically call for separation from India, but

instead calls 'out to all humanity' to 'Support the oppressed Kashmiris' and it is further emphasized that 'leading Human Rights Activists' will be speaking out.

Edinburgh KSM has been active in a few concrete ways for Kashmir as well as for other issues. Specifically, funds have been raised for humanitarian relief due to flooding in Kashmir. But, on the local level in the UK, there has been engagement with MPs (members of the UK Parliament) and MSPs (members of the Scottish Parliament), lobbying for support and attempting to educate local legislators about the situation in Kashmir. Letter-writing and petition-signing are also tools for activists in Scotland as well as in England, but these are probably better-equipped and more widely distributed on social media feeds

At the end of year general meeting for Edinburgh KSM for 2014/15, one of the committee members gave an overview of the year. He described the pros and cons of the meetings and events, which ones were good and which drew a larger crowd. He had expressed disappointment in not being able to 'pull enough people.' He lamented the fact that they could not retain enough members that wanted to become actively involved, 'We need all members to get involved rather than just the committee members doing that.' He recognized that collaboration with other societies raised Kashmir awareness and was pleased that students showed up to protest in front of the Indian consulate with Kashmiris. He further pointed to the amount of likes that the Facebook page was getting, which he claimed has a reach of over 3000 people. For all the positives and negatives surrounding getting people together on behalf of Kashmir's freedom movement, he argued that the overall result is positive:

'visible the message, it matters that we are playing the part, standing up against injustice in any part of the world. We should not think just about results, but slowly rise up. KSM branches are opening up at other universities. There is KSM SOAS, the Kashmir Awareness Society. Different branches and affiliations – we can work together and share ideas.'

As this was my last meeting with Edinburgh KSM, it seemed to have ended on a rather positive note, but uncertain of its future. Without keeping up momentum and devising strategies for attracting supporters, it could very well have ended there. The group remained active on Facebook through 2017, but participation, like social media posts ebb and flow, with major events or crises generally increasing activity. The group no longer exists and its Facebook page has been taken down as of 2018.

KSM Edinburgh: Participants

My first exposure to KSM Edinburgh was at the film screening *Kashmir's Trails of Torture*. I was somewhat surprised to find such an interest in Kashmir. Often you hear from respondents or read in literature and articles on Kashmir that the Kashmir conflict and especially the sufferings of the Kashmiri people are very often left underreported. It was exciting to see so much interest. The room booked was an auditorium style lecture hall that could have seated around 200. Certainly not all of those seats were filled. But about 40 of them were, and that was marked progress in raising awareness for the issue. As one of the organizers was a member of SJP, it was clear that there was some cross-advertising through those channels. I heard about the event through a Pakistani colleague also in South Asian studies at the university, so it was also advertised to postgraduates focusing on South Asia. In practice, those that attended were mostly South Asian, from India or Pakistan with only two members actually from Indian Kashmir. I did not have the ability to canvas the whole room for ethnic or national background, so these observations were made after the film viewing when questions were being asked and many people volunteered some background information. The age range was diverse, with some undergraduate, postgraduate, and non-students in attendance, including an older Indian couple who claimed that they visited Kashmir on their honeymoon many years ago. As this was a fledgling society, I was very interested in what it was that attracted people to the KSM.

The film spurred on the beginnings of KSM Edinburgh and shortly after they had regular meetings. People from South Asia (India, Pakistan and Kashmir) proved to be the majority. But there were also non-South Asians that were regularly present. It was rare that I was the only Caucasian in the room. The British (South Asian and non-South Asian) and European participants were brought there presumably due to other affiliations and their expertise was often sought. One young woman, for example, was involved with Amnesty International and offered feedback on strategies for organising events such as the vigil. Another couple of young women were involved in the Palestine society. They were from various backgrounds, including Middle Eastern. A core group of participants for meetings in the first year of the society was around eight to ten people. Of these eight

people there were two young women who were born in Pakistan Kashmir but came to the UK when they were very little, two young male Kashmiri students from the Indian side, around three other non-Kashmiri South Asians and three more non-South Asian activists, including myself. There tended to be more men than women, but not by a large margin, and for the duration of time I was there, women always had leadership roles. This demographic did not change much as my time with the group continued. KSM Edinburgh never had a packed-out event, but when they held joint events, they always had a good turnout – or at least as good as they anticipated. Events were diverse but were dominated more by students than members of the community, diaspora or otherwise. The vigil which has been previously referenced in addition to events that were meant to not only raise awareness for the Kashmir conflict but also for its culture were well-attended and rather diverse. The events which offered food (that had been donated by a local restaurant) in exchange for a small donation (£2-£5) were always well-received.

From the initial meeting, but particularly after the vigil, I became interested in what other activities KSM members were involved with and what other activities brought outside activists to KSM events and meetings. The KSM Edinburgh group regularly saw attendance from those involved in a myriad other campaigns and societies. Those responding to one-on-one interviews alone reported involvement in the Tibet society, SJP, the Pakistan society, South Asian Students Association (SASA), the University's feminist group (Femsoc), Amnesty International, Engineers without Borders, SACC, Stop the War, Radical Independence, and reported affiliations to inter-faith organizations, youth organizations, pro-Scottish independence campaign, art-based, community involvement, professional organizations, and other Kashmiri associations. This is along the same findings other social movement theorists have noted whereby activists simply tend to be more 'active,' or have the disposition to be involved in campaigns or causes (see Oleson, 2011). Non-Kashmiris were likely to be involved in rights-based campaigns such as lobbying against anti-terrorism legislation or participation in anti-racist demonstrations.

Before I began fieldwork officially with KSM Edinburgh, I interviewed a few participants early on. The first year in Edinburgh (2012-13) I interviewed three young men studying in Scotland who were from Indian Kashmir. Although two of the women involved in the KSM were from Kashmir, they came to the UK as very small children and have

family in the Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK). Since the troubles were more prevalent on the Indian side, I thought it would give me the best direction for my thesis. There were no women from IAK involved in Edinburgh KSM to my knowledge. There were, however, a number of women represented at regular meetings and events from different parts of South Asia, Europe²¹ and Southeast Asia. Male participants were also from different parts of South Asia and Europe.

I have purported that it is important and necessary to frame the Kashmir freedom movement as a human rights issue. Despite initial interviews focusing on how Kashmiris mobilize and the importance of social media, the respondents always drew the interview back to core issues of human rights. This was true whether discussing more legal issues such as the implementation of the plebiscite or the violation of Article 370 by the central government. The violations of legal rights were framed as the violation of human rights, and this included the right to self-determination. In two separate interviews, the article was cited as being violated by the transfer of land to the Amarnath Shrine Board, the board that facilitates an annual Hindu yatra, or pilgrimage.

Wasim and Mahmud, both young men from IAK studying in Scotland connected human rights violations to the huge protests of 2008 and beyond. For me, it initially seemed almost tangential, as the question I asked Mahmud was regarding access to Facebook as a medium of protest. He claimed that prior to 2008, the majority of Kashmiris relied on newspapers or the radio for news, but that after 2008, 'when the Amarnath land grab issue happened when...63 acres of land transferred to the Shrine board which was against the Article 370 [sic] there was a huge uproar about that and the medium used at the time by the separatists was Internet.' It was after this violation of article 370 (as perceived by activists) that separatists and activists began to rely more on Facebook and individual websites. This was due to media censorship, but was also a convenient way to organize and publicize protests. Wasim, also invoked article 370 as being violated when the land was transferred to the Shrine board. He did ensure to specify that Hindu pilgrims were welcome to come to Kashmir, but that it was not legal to sell land to outsiders. Wasim described the event:

²¹ For purposes of this study, the United Kingdom is considered part of Europe.

‘The government tried to transfer a large chunk of land to the Shrine Board. This is obviously not good to do in disputed territory, so we started protesting. And then they started killing people – the Indian security forces, CPRF – they shot people from point blank range – shot to kill.’

Wasim described the cycle of protest and retaliation as a ‘domino effect’ which led to severe limitations in mobility due to the increase in checkpoints and curfews.

Protesting the violation of Article 370, regardless of the accuracy in interpretations of the legislation by activists, did lead to the cycle of protest and security force retaliation which is familiar to anyone with an interest in the contemporary Kashmir conflict. What is interesting is the common occurrence to invoke this specific Article and violation thereof as a sort of flashpoint for conflict. It should be noted that neither Wasim nor Mahmud were studying law or journalism, yet they both chose to engage with legal issues within which to frame their grievances.

To demonstrate how young Kashmiris reported the situation in Kashmir in relation to a larger frame of human rights, the same person who discussed the UN mandate to me above, Wasim, also reflected upon the wider human rights frame at the end of our discussion when I asked him a more general question regarding what sort of research he would like to see done on Kashmir. His response was a reflection of the anger that I saw build up during the interview so was rather passionate but also clearly framed in terms of the person – a female researcher – he was speaking with:

‘All the human rights violations especially against women. You would be appalled at how India uses rape as a weapon of war against women in Kashmir. If you look into it, you’ll know what they’ve been doing all these years and would be surprised. You’ll see why people are against India.’

Another other young Kashmiri male I spoke with early on in my research in 2013 also connected the right to self-determination with human rights in general. Sharif, who has been quoted elsewhere regarding human rights violations that have happened to people he is close to, additionally discussed with me the need for the referendum to take place in Kashmir. Like Wasim, he agrees that azadi cannot happen so long as there are Indian forces in Kashmir. He complains that security in Kashmir inhibit daily activities such as commuting to school or work and compares this to Scotland, where he is able to come and go from places as he pleases without passing checkpoints.

‘In my place, I have to cross...army...I have to give everyday my identity card, even though they know who I am...But I have to pass everyday. I can’t go after 10. If I

go after 10, I will not be able to go to my home because I have to pass that check post.'

Sharif uses the example of checkpoints and claims that there are 'one million army' in Kashmir that inhibit free movement. He connects this grievance to other, more grave abuses of human rights in Kashmir when I asked him if he thought that Kashmir could only achieve this sort of azadi – freedom of movement – as an independent country. His response made it clear that he saw no resolution inside an India. He got upset and declared that after the murder of '200,000 persons, I don't want to be with India, obviously.' As an outsider, it is challenging to make the connections between checkpoints and the murder of 200,000 people. But, this connection is easily made as they are perceived to be both a consequence of an occupation. With a large amount of soldiers present, it is difficult to separate a 'lesser' human rights violation with a 'greater' human rights violation. Whether murdering or inhibiting the flow of people, Indian security forces are seen as an evil to be removed and again, the solution can only be independence.

Earlier in the thesis, I discussed the collective suffering and collective memory of suffering of the Kashmiri people. When the sufferer is a young person he or she suffers in a very particular way. The victim must carry the weight of their suffering into adulthood and sometimes harbouring ill feelings towards what is perceived to be the reason for your suffering (India), makes diplomatic solutions less likely. Concessions cannot be made. Only freedom will permit the sufferer a way out of misery. This is one point that was made quite evident when asking a respondent early on in my research whether or not Kashmiris would accept autonomy as a solution. Sharif responded to a query about the acceptance of autonomy within India as opposed to the freedom option:

'Look, I don't know what happened in 90s so – at the time, my ideology may have been different, maybe I would be friendly with India and Pakistan. But right now it's post-90, it's post 2007, it's post 2011, and it's post- after murder of 2000 people – 200,000 persons. I don't want to be with India, obviously.'

Sharif, an engineering student from IAK who was affiliated with KSM Edinburgh when it first began, also shared his experience of victimization by recounting how his friend was shot coming home after playing cricket:

'My friend, he was paralyzed back home in his bed. He's just 20. We were playing cricket in 2007 – 2008...And we were just coming from playing cricket and he was shot from backside and he's still in his bed and he can't move...this is just my story. Every Kashmiri has this kind of story...'

Sharif begins his answer to the question of autonomy by relating to the communal suffering of all Kashmiri people before he continues by relating more specific grievances, things he has witnessed personally.

‘What they have done to me – my cousin was shot dead. His kidneys were taken out...His kidneys were cut from his body and he was so brutally mutilated – he was killed. After everything that happened, I won’t be with India.’

In Sharif’s case, it seems that the victims here are not just Sharif’s cousin or friend or Sharif himself as a witness to these atrocities, but all Kashmiris. The discourse is similarly found from the senior journalist’s perspective as well: everyone in Kashmir has suffered loss.

Core Issue: Plebiscite and Right to Self-Determination

One of the most common themes across all samples of interviews and re-visited during meetings are the right to self-determination as a human right which is commonly referenced in international forums such as the United Nations and repeated by activists for self-determination of Kashmir, Tibet, Palestine, Scotland, and others. The most common terminology used in Edinburgh in 2012-2013 and highlighted in interviews was the term ‘plebiscite,’ which has been commonly used in activist literature on Kashmir, in academic literature and encapsulated by the Plebiscite Front, one of the first well-organized non-violent attempts to lobby for the implementation of the UN mandate for a plebiscite. All Kashmiris are familiar with the UN mandate for a plebiscite and regularly breach this as evidence of right to self-determination and hotly contend that India has been denying Kashmir’s rights through not implementing the plebiscite. Since 2014, it has become much more common to refer to the plebiscite as a referendum – the same discourse used to describe the legislation which would see Scottish become independent. The referendum, which took place but did not pass in September 2014 was and continues to be used as exemplary evidence of how to democratically resolve long-standing territorial issues. As a small sample of the shift in usage, the term ‘referendum’ was more widely used across all samples (interviews, events, and workshops), however, the term ‘plebiscite’ was more frequently used at events with older activists with some ties to the JKLF. Students and youths had much more of a preference to use the term ‘referendum.’

This could be because it was used more often in the UK and the term 'plebiscite' could have seemed to be more antiquated; or, it could be a way to consciously relate the Kashmir freedom movement to Scotland's movement for separation from the United Kingdom. Richard, an organizer for SACC, regularly collaborates with minority communities in Scotland, and addresses the recent call for a referendum in Scotland and its relevance to Kashmir. He claims that campaigning 'in and around the referendum in Scotland became such a strong focus for political activity...' and that 'KSM made the point that Scotland has had their referendum and India has systematically over 60 years refused a referendum for Kashmir.' Although Richard acknowledges that Scotland has not been under the same sort of oppression found in Kashmir by India rule, he does emphasise that it brings the opportunity for campaigning around the issue.

The key distinctions between the campaign for an independent Scotland and the campaign for an independent Kashmir, or Tibet, or Palestine, is the perception of the residents of the latter territories to be under occupation. The presence of a large force of armed personnel makes on the streets of Kashmir, the presence and nuisance of checkpoints and curfews, makes for a compelling case for independence. The logic is generally that Kashmiris cannot experience freedom or enjoy democratic rights under such imperilled living conditions.

In early Spring 2013 at a campus café in Edinburgh, I asked Wasim what he thought could be an ideal long-term solution to the situation in Kashmir.

'The long-term solution is to demilitarize Kashmir, start an investigation for all human rights violations, killings, the disappearances, custodial killings, rapes – everything. Those people [sic] should be punished, whether it's CRPF, Indian Army, whoever is responsible...'

The link between the right to self-determination and the militarization of Kashmir (often referred to as an occupation) is equally habitual. A desire for justice and the scepticism around the likelihood of perpetrators being punished is also commonly expressed. This young man's expressions when he claimed 'Those people [sic] should be punished...' clearly denoted a level of scepticism. But it was followed up with is seen as the only reliable long-term solution to the problems of justice-seekers in Kashmir:

'The most important thing is to hold UN-monitored referendum. That is want we want. We're not asking for freedom straight away. We have been given a right to

self-determination promised to us. It's better for India to start being honest with Kashmir.'

Mahmud, in a previous meeting also framed Kashmir in the context of international organizations. He gave a bit longer of a historical synopsis from the partition of India and Pakistan but framed his support for a referendum in a very simple manner:

'...So, we are not just saying that when we want this right to self-determination or freedom, we just want freedom from both India and Pakistan...the UN Security Council resolution was, there should be a tripartite talk and it should be. Say, the referendum should be 'Do you want to go with India, with Pakistan, or be independent?' Let's see which one gets most. If independence gets most, go to independence, if Pakistan gets most, go with Pakistan, if India gets most go with India. Cause by that we know that majority wants to go with this thing. And everyone has to respect that majority whether it's India or Pakistan or us Kashmiris.'

He acknowledges that the situation in Kashmir is complex, but also purports that even if the outcome of a plebiscite goes awry and Pakistan invades and occupies Kashmir that international organizations should step in:

Yes, there might be a chance, Pakistan will come and say 'we don't respect the laws and we will try to occupy the land. That's why... Why do we have NATO and the UN Security Council meet? That's why they meet - they are there to help out if a situation arises...NATO's bombing Pakistan. They can bomb them again if they try to come and occupy Kashmir...'

Kashmiris actually seem quite well-disposed to the idea of international intervention on Kashmir. Almost every respondent – arguably every respondent from Kashmir – has mentioned that the UN has mandated a plebiscite (or referendum) to be held to determine the fate of the Kashmir people. Not giving the people the option to choose has been a big grievance. It is also an argument visited when discussing the Kashmir conflict to those outside of Kashmir. It is assumed that not a lot of people outside of South Asia are familiar with the historical contexts of the UN mandate and during my visit, the story of Kashmir and the denial of the plebiscite was retold to me by several different people during open-ended discussions. The re-telling of the story was very similar to the next narrative with similar elements. These are repeated in the communities abroad, but the stories produced added more depth as the people I worked with knew I was familiar with the situation. The stories shifted from narratives about Kashmir's political history to highlighting particular aspects of this history and relating it to me – the outsider – in a way

that would garner some form of sympathy, or to consciously frame the situation in a way another activist would understand.

The voice for the reformer of Indian Kashmir is often overshadowed by the strength of the voices claiming that Kashmir can only achieve peace within its borders if it rids itself of India, perceived as an occupying force. Empathy is expressed by non-Kashmiris in this regard. It is clear that non-Kashmiris support Kashmir's right to an independent state. Mumtaz, a young woman from Pakistan who went to two events in Edinburgh claimed in response to the question regarding the most important issues, that Kashmiris

'want their independence and this is something they're not getting...they keep fighting for it and they are suffering a lot. They want to live freely and happily and they are tired of this conflict and of Pakistan and India...they are tired of not getting independence...'

Mumtaz, here, emphasized the lengthy struggle for freedom and implying that the only way to end the long-term conflict is with a settlement resulting in an independent Kashmir. The motivational framing of the issue is also again approached, and again often tied to issues surrounding themes of justice. In response to a question 'What would you say motivates others to participate,' Mumtaz, claimed, 'As a human, you can't see people suffer...they're just left there without a state and people would like to stand up for justice and against suffering.'

When I asked Richard, the campaigner for SACC, if he supported Kashmir independence, he was hesitant to respond. He claimed that he supported 'self-determination' of Kashmiris and believed that azadi, for many Kashmiris, did mean independence from India. This was a similar response from Salena, a second-generation Kashmiri studying in Scotland. She claimed to support the implementation of the UN resolution. As she was living in the UK today, she felt she could not impose a solution of independence but asserted that the result of a referendum should be respected.

Solidarities

For KSM Edinburgh, the pro-freedom movement in Scotland and local organizations and campaigns proved to be sources of solidarity. The right to self-determination was particularly salient at KSM Edinburgh, in part, due to the Scottish referendum coinciding with the time I spent with the group. Chapter five (p.181) reflects upon a rally held in favour of an independent Scotland during which members of the crowd also lent support for a free Kashmir. KSM representatives made their campaign for a free Kashmir known at a pro-freedom rally for Scotland, and pro-Scottish independence activists spoke of their campaign vividly at the 5 February 2013 vigil outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh (page 142). Throughout my time with KSM Edinburgh, I also noticed the influence of the Scottish call for a 'referendum' on what had previously been referred to as a 'plebiscite' by Kashmiri activists, particularly in literature prior to 2013. The leaflet (figure 6:5) draws attention to the lack of a referendum for Kashmir, despite the recent referendum for



Scottish

Figure 6:5 Leaflet urging support for a referendum for Kashmir, 2014

independence. It further explains the UN mandate for a referendum (rather than a

'plebiscite') and offers a link to the UNSC Resolution 47 regarding the call for the implementation of a 'free and impartial plebiscite' (unscr.com).

Richard, a spokesperson for Scotland Against Criminalising Communities (SACC) has been involved in many campaigns that affect minority communities in the UK. When I asked him about the impact of the Scottish referendum on KSM, he commented that the campaign had become 'such a strong focus for progressive political activity...' and that KSM in particular had 'made the point that Scotland had their referendum [but] India has systematically over sixty years refused a referendum for Kashmir.' Although the referendum had done well to raise awareness for other self-determination movements such as Kashmir, Richard also argued against a close comparison of the two movements. Scotland was a part of British imperialism for one, who had been advocating for their independence for a long time. Kashmir, on the other hand had been suffering much more significant oppression vis-à-vis India than Scotland vis-à-vis the United Kingdom. Richard, like many other outsider activists, learned of KSM after involvement working with Palestinians whom he argues has the right to self-determination. Other people at each site who were not from South Asia and/or Kashmir also regularly expressed involvement in other freedom movements such as Tibet and Palestine.

In addition to the solidarity surrounding self-determination movements, KSM Edinburgh was also impacted by more localized campaigns. Again, Richard's SAAC organization worked in collaboration with minority communities in order to prevent the extension of legislation into Scotland such as Prevent, which unfairly targets Muslim communities. In a KSM meeting on 16 March 2015, Richard asserted that Prevent was 'training propaganda in support of the War on Terror' and discussed the ways that the terrorism legislation would be rolled out in Scotland and ways to mobilize against the legislation. One of the leaflets handed out at the 5 February 2013 vigil, encouraging an end to Muslim bashing, was an advertisement for an Islamophobia Awareness Conference of which SAAC was one of the co-sponsors.

Solidarities forged around cultures of resistance have been reflected in the types of collaborative events that KSM has had with the inclusion of other organizations such as SJP, chapter three (p. 138). Support for other self-determination movements is also reflected on the KSM Facebook page through displays of pro-Palestinian graffiti or the

sharing of articles expressing support for Palestine. Within KSM, there were several members also active in SJP.



“Palestinians respect and appreciate that Kashmiris are with us. It boosts our morale and gives...

Figure 6:6 Article demonstration appreciation for show of solidarity with Palestine 20 Aug 2014 shared on KSM Edinburgh Facebook



Figure 6:7 Free Gaza graffiti shared on KSM Facebook 2014

Solidarity between KSM and IAK was proposed on my visit to IAK in 2013, where a senior journalist called Abdul suggested how the international community or an organization such as KSM could lobby for rights in the Valley. Sitting in a room with two

young men who had been imprisoned for attending protests while at university, he suggested international pressure could alleviate some problems immediately for detained youths like Rafi and Farooq, whom I speak about more at length in chapter eight. Specifically, KSM and affiliates could lobby for the restoration of passports so that youths picked up for protesting could be permitted to travel. Secondly, they could restore their permissions to obtain government employment in Kashmir, since private employment or running one's own business are tenuous especially under the pressures of curfews, strikes, checkpoints, and other inconveniences that do not occur in other parts of India.

Conclusion

The small card advertising the vigil in the beginning of this chapter suggests that the reason for the human rights violations in Kashmir is due to an 'occupation' by 'India.' Viewed in this perspective, it is easy to make a tenuous link between movements in opposition to perceived 'colonialism' or 'imperialism,' as was observed at the vigil. It could be noted, however, that the 'Kashmiri' is a separate entity from the 'Indian.' In this sense, the Kashmiri is the occupied and the Indian is the occupying force could suggest an ethnic movement; however, as Cockell (2000) had reported, the Kashmir identity has developed as a result of shared experiences of suffering; in relation to torture, human rights violations, and rape being used as a weapon of war. A movement being in opposition to torture, human rights violations, and rape being used as a weapon of war is indeed not a hugely controversial concept. It serves as a universal rallying point that others, especially other activists can get behind. Interview respondents all referenced some aspect of human rights. Some highlighted the women's human rights while others highlighted freedom of movement or speech.

CHAPTER 7

KSM SOAS: Origin, Participants, and Core Issues

‘SOAS Kashmir Solidarity Movement is a society dedicated to promoting and raising awareness of the Kashmir conflict; as well as working with respect to and interest of self-determination of the Kashmiri people’ (KSM SOAS, 2014)

London has a much larger Kashmir diaspora than Edinburgh and has a more established history of community and political Kashmiri organizations. For one, the JKLF ‘...is located in Luton where its founder, Amanullah Khan, has relatives and a wide support base in the local Kashmiri diaspora’ (Webb, 2014: 260). Luton, to the north of London, has a substantial diaspora of Kashmiris. Aside from Luton, London provides a forum for collective action from not only student and workers’ associations, but is an active site for protests, lobbying, and other activist activities, including the million march discussed in chapter four of this thesis. For activist movements such as KSM, the march was seen as a success, however, they refrained from commenting on the march in detail. This further raises questions about whether these organizations try to separate themselves from these marches, or whether these events, held close to the SOAS division of KSM, have a firm influence on the group. When I first came to do fieldwork in London in 2015, I anticipated more diaspora involvement and perhaps some friction between long-term diaspora and the transient student population. Although members of the diaspora may have shown up to some events, I did not feel comfortable walking up to people I had never seen before with a notebook for fear that it would deter them from coming to future events. Access was more easily available to those who attended the meetings for one on one interviews and as this was the focus of my research in Edinburgh, I decided this was the best approach.

The period for fieldwork with KSM SOAS group was from late September 2015 through mid-February 2016 to coordinate with the what I anticipated to be the most active time of the semesters for the group. This time period has included observations, attendance at meetings and events, and qualitative interviews as with the first site. Being an unwaged student also limited my duration of field study and further constrained me to

commute to the SOAS campus rather than try to venture further to Luton in any attempt to reach out to the diaspora This would perhaps be more practical for a funded study.

KSM SOAS: Origin

On 22 November 2014, the Kashmir Solidarity Movement division at the University of London School of Oriental and African Studies was officially born. It was hailed as a mark of progress for the Kashmir movement in the UK, with London being an epicenter of social action. A committee member, from outside London inferred that she had a hand in setting up the division but declined to interview with me so I was never able to learn more about this or plans for further opening of or collaboration with societies in other parts of the UK.



Figure 7:1 KSM Edinburgh promotes new society in London

On 22 November 2014, KSM SOAS already had 823 followers. It was evident that the promotion of the new group was widely distributed, but I also suspected the popularity in contrast to KSM Edinburgh was due to its London location and the presence of a greater Kashmir community in proximity. On 26 November KSM SOAS held its first meeting, a meet and greet advertised on its Facebook page which got 117 RSVPs. As I was not there, I could not vouch for the numbers of actual attendees, but it did show significant

interest early on. Based on Facebook posts, group continued to be very active its first year in existence holding organizational meetings, film screenings, campaigning information, news from Kashmir on both sides of the LoC, and more significant annual events such as Kashmir Solidarity Day (5 February) and Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day (23 February). Being well-connected in London there was another event in March on occupation and resistance featuring keynote academics and civil rights activists. As with KSM Edinburgh, the group was quiet after the end of the semester with irregular postings. Towards the end of the summer, however there was a lot of activity denouncing enforced disappearances, with posts relaying demonstrations against disappearances in IAK. Just before the beginning of the semester on 9 September 2016 the group posted an advertisement for Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JK SCCS) who released a report on human rights abuses in IAK. The report, available at jkccs.net reports on documented 'enforced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, sexual violence and torture with 927 identified alleged perpetrators' (KSM SOAS 2015). The report was widely anticipated among those aware of its impending release in Edinburgh and was widely distributed across social media and affiliated networks. A Guardian article released shortly after attested to the wide distribution and lent to the immediacy of the problems of systemic abuse in Kashmir. It was in this context that in late September I began fieldwork in London with KSM SOAS.

The first event I attended with KSM SOAS was SOAS Freshers Fayre. I introduced myself to two members of the KSM at their booth. As I was previously in contact with them, they were aware that I would be coming to London to attend meetings and conduct some interviews. For the first few months, I did not conduct one-on-one interviews, but played the role of a participant observer. I did help them with passing out some flyers and leaflets. One of the leaflets is analysed more closely later in comparison to KSM Edinburgh's primary leaflet on Kashmir. These leaflets primarily outline some

basic facts about the Kashmir conflict. The back of the leaflet for KSM SOAS was

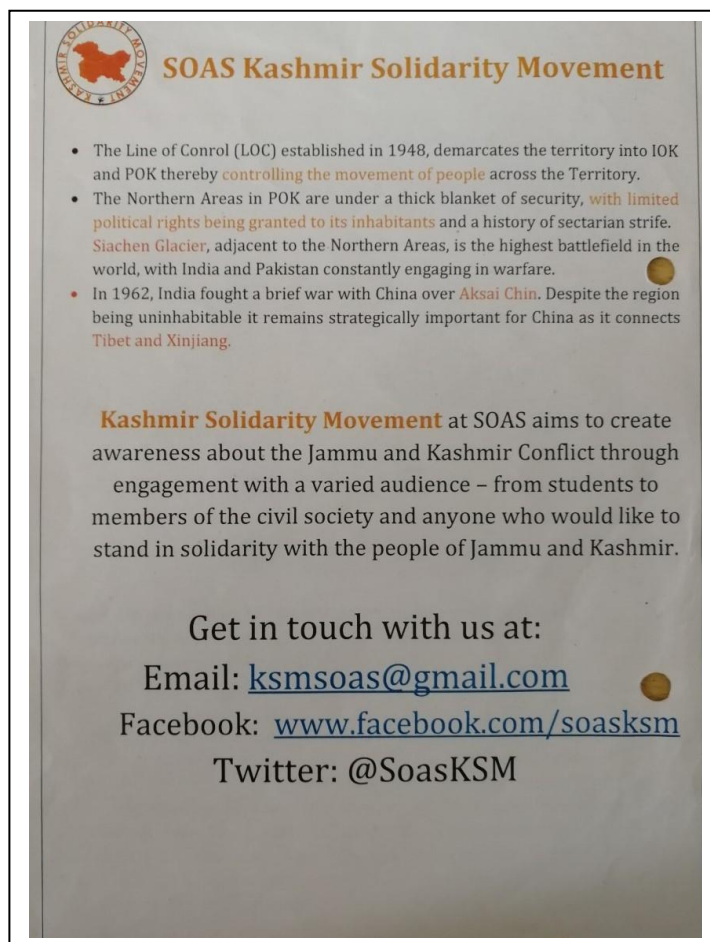


Figure 7:2 Rear of handout of SOAS KSM, September 2015

interesting in that it immediately tells the reader that the Kashmir conflict is not just an Indian issue, but it draws attention to geopolitical underpinnings of the conflict between China, Pakistan, and India. It further draws attention to areas under Pakistani control (formerly Gilgit Baltistan) which were integrated with Pakistan rather than with Azad Kashmir. Further, there is an enhanced version of the mission statement calling for raising awareness and standing 'in solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir' as well as contact details to get in touch with committee members

of the group. The attention paid to areas outwith IAK were my immediate takeaway from the flyers as this issue is not immediately stressed on the flyers for KSM Edinburgh. Those flyers report on the ceding of a tract of land from Pakistan to China, but this is merely part of the timeline on the rear of the flyer rather than highlighted in the same manner.

Also available at the Fresher's stall for SOAS KSM were postcards with Mir Suhail's political artwork on the front side with the rear, white side addressed to the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights. This was an interesting lobbying tactic which combined protest art with traditional letter-writing. Like many messages from Kashmir activists, this one is framed in terms of human rights and relies on numbers to help advocate the injustices surrounding the Indian occupation of Kashmir:

‘Jammu and Kashmir is the most militarized zone in the world with an estimated presence of 7,00,000 armed forces personnel. This has resulted in 70,000 deaths, 8000+ enforced disappearances, 7000+ unknown, unmarked and mass graves and widespread and systematic torture and sexual violence.’

Mir Suhail’s cartoons joins political photographers and other ‘artist’ work which is often on display at meetings at SOAS KSM, or distributed on social media.



Figure 7:3 Front of postcard with MIR Suhail’s artwork

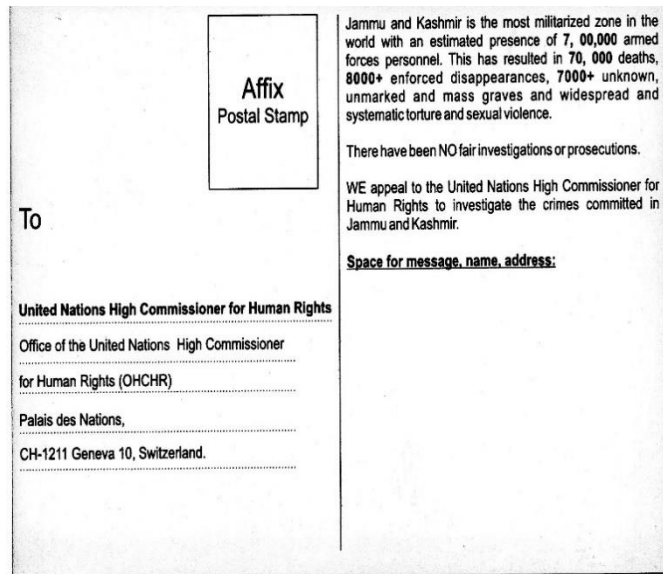


Figure 7:4 Rear of postcard addressed to UN High Commission for Human Rights, September 2015

Participants

Like KSM Edinburgh, KSM SOAS participants were demographically diverse. There was, however, a much greater concentration on Kashmiris, and especially Kashmiris from the Indian side of Kashmir were in greater numbers. Meetings were typically small, with only around eight to twelve core group members attending regularly. It was more common for me to find myself the only non-South Asian in the room during these meetings, but within the group they were diverse in other ways. The gender dynamic was skewed in favour of women with only two or three males in attendance. The age gap was not significant. Some were undergraduate and others postgraduate students, with the overall age range

from late teens to early thirties. Most came from Muslim backgrounds but at least one active participant was Christian. (I have not included myself in this summary as I was in my mid-thirties and identify as Pagan). For some meetings, I was not the only non-Asian female, with one student attending KSM meetings after coming to know about Kashmir during involvement with the Palestine society. The events certainly had a much larger turnout and it was much more diverse. The *Inshallah Football* (2010) screening had a packed room with a much more diverse age range. I would have been overwhelmed to canvas everyone for their ethnic identity, but it was my assumption that members of the South Asian diaspora, including Kashmiris were in attendance. Most of this group was never seen again at other events, including the similarly packed out initial meet and greet. The meet and greet was more representative of most of the events I had experienced in my time spent with KSM Edinburgh. This meeting drew people from activist and academic background and also saw some interested students. Again, some of the students were similarly involved in other societies but some were also interested due to their studies in a related discipline such as politics. Unlike some of the later panel discussions, the meet and greet was less about academics than it was about activism and raising awareness for Kashmir – as well as promoting the society in general.

From my time spent with KSM Edinburgh, I was also interested in what sorts of activities those in KSM SOAS were also involved in, which could contextualize the type of person attracted to KSM and also begin to answer questions as to how they became involved. Those respondents from KSM SOAS reported involvement in other Kashmir societies, the Association for Disappeared Persons (Kashmir), Islamic Help, Water Aid, the Model UN, UNICEF, Palestine society, a Dance society, Akkhira Project, Oxfam, as well as working on campaigns for women's empowerment, relief for Syrian refugees, education programs for Iraqi refugees, spoken word, and even engagement in lobbying the UK MPs on the All Parties Kashmir group. Despite the small sample, some trends do seem to be apparent. It is notable that on average, most respondents were involved in two or three other activities.

SOAS KSM in particular had strong links to organizations in IAK and promoted and raised funds for APDP at their events. On 30 August 2015 they held an event with a public display in central London regarding enforced disappearance of Kashmiris. In publicizing the event, they proclaimed, as often is referenced in other events. One post

summarizes the condition of enforced disappearances in IAK and the role APDP has: 'Since 1989 it is estimated that over 10,000 Kashmiris have been [sic] disappeared by the Indian state. APDP Kashmir work hard to document these cases and their loved ones' (SOAS KSM Facebook 19 August 2015).

A young woman going by the name 'Sami' for interview purposes is a spoken word poet as well as active in the Association for Disappeared Persons (APDP) and the Kashmir Institute of International Affairs. She combines her professional advocacy with her art in order to highlight some of the ongoing issues in Kashmir. She is a student outside of SOAS, but helps when she can. One of the ways she engages other activists outside of Kashmir is by relating the conflict in Kashmir to other conflicts in the world. She claims that a strong reason those with no South Asian affiliation participate is because 'it's a kind of human issue.' She asserts that KSM focuses on human rights violations and that it

'touches a nerve because it's a human tragedy on the ground and I feel like it appeals to people's sense of humanity and [sic] they feel they should get involved and...talk about human rights and...about occupation so people draw parallels to their own struggles and despite being a far off place in the mountains it is so similar to other issues...'

KSM, she notes, often serves as an introductory point for people to learn about Kashmir. But for many organizers, she would like to see more action and mobilisation happening than KSM currently does, which is more about 'education' and raising awareness. Sami, like many other KSM organizers may have an academic background outside of politics but have become in their own ways professional advocates who liaise with a number of transnational organizations that connect Kashmir to other transnational conflicts. Using their professional expertise, they are often able to gain sympathizers from other movements, but this does beg the question of how transnational Kashmir organizations could solicit the support of international activists and in what ways would be most effective a response to violations in Kashmir.

Other testimony of respondents was representative of the human rights framing tactic. It was not necessarily a conscious effort, but nevertheless the narrative presented personal stories of rights violations. Zeeshan, a Kashmiri in his thirties works full time in London and sends remittances home to his family in IAK, which he hasn't seen since he was a boy. His parents sent him away to Azad Kashmir because, he claims, during that

time in the 1990s, boys were targeted by security forces. He recounted his experiences back then, before leaving IAK:

‘everything was shut in the government sector...the education sector was shut...for three months we were off, there was no school, everything in the government sectors was shut to control the youths from twelve to eighteen years...so that there would be no one to fight... They started arresting (them) and young boys started to go missing. They found graves with 200-500 plus, mass graves – we believe they were those guys that started to go missing.’

In the conversation with Zeeshan, he recounts a sort of level of victimization and fear that grew during his experiences. Initially, he described how schools were closed and there were restrictions to movement. But then, he describes preventive detainment in order to keep young men and boys from adding numbers to the militancy. From here, the victimization grows to mass graves and his experiences of people he knew and knew of disappearing. The final stages of victimization before, it seems, there is a decision to fight back or try to escape was recounting not just physical abuse but the threat and fear of being abused sexually by Indian soldiers.

‘One day when we were playing cricket...they [Indian soldiers] were coming and doing a raid there. They were...there were serious cases of rape of young boys. We were scared to go out, especially for rape cases. Finally, I went to the Pakistani side and had been living there...’ (Zeeshan, 2016)

Witness testimony like this is framed in that sub-frame of victimization, which was asserted previously is an aspect of that collective master frame of human rights.

Core Issues and Strategies

In addition to the brief epigraph in the beginning of this chapter outlining SOAS KSM’s mission statement, the group’s aims and objectives are displayed on their student union page, reproduced in figure 7:5. Awareness raising seems to be the primary activity or goal in the initial stages of the society. This inherently means that it is the aim of KSM to educate the public on Kashmir, from where it is to the historical origins of the conflict to narrating individual stories on the trauma Kashmiris have endured.


- To highlight and raise awareness of the issues affecting the former princely state of Jammu & Kashmir, including the origins and history of the conflict, as well as human rights abuses carried out by the occupying forces of India and Pakistan
- To stand in solidarity with the Kashmiri people
- The society aims to study the Kashmir conflict through various means, including hosting political, historical and cultural events. The society will focus on the entire region of Kashmir from Pakistan-Controlled Kashmir, to Indian-Controlled Kashmir and Chinese-controlled Kashmir.
- The society intends to mobilise students in order to achieve a positive settlement for the Kashmiri people, by organising campaigns, fundraising and lobbying relevant bodies to uphold international human rights law.
- Promoting a non-partisan approach to resolving the conflict by focusing on the Kashmiri peoples' right to self-determination.
- Collaborating with both national and international communities groups to build a broad awareness campaign.

Figure 7:5 KSM SOAS Aims and objectives, soasunion.org/activities/society/ksmssoas

KSM SOAS, more strategically located in London and in closer proximity to a larger South Asian diaspora community, tends to have less difficulties attracting large crowds to its events. Although the duration of time spent with KSM SOAS was limited to around six months, some themes did emerge that point to a similar direction being taken as KSM Edinburgh in the way the society tries to frame its message in terms of human rights. First, there was also intent discussion over target audience and how best to promote the society. It was suggested, for example, to put up posters at all universities in the area, as SOAS was part of the University of London system, and other universities were within the vicinity as well. Further, it was reinforced that the society should promote themselves across a range of social media platforms and to disseminate with other networks, 'not just students' and 'not just Pakistanis.' In addition to who to bring in to events and meetings, the first meeting after the society's Meet and Greet also included debate over what to put on the KSM SOAS banner. There was a suggestion to place the popular freedom slogan *Hum Kya Chahte? Azadi!* Or 'What do we want? Freedom!' It was not outright rejected, but after a tangential discussion it was simply agreed that the slogan which would be ultimately approved would have to be 'politically correct.' Like KSM Edinburgh, the

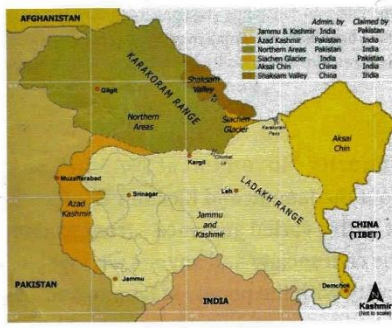
meeting also made suggestions that were based upon strategies used in the Palestinian movement such as emphasizing themes of occupation in international law and non-violent resistance. There was further a call to network with other solidarity campaigns, more generally. Like KSM Edinburgh, KSM SOAS also chose to draw attention to the Kashmir conflict through the frame of human rights and via utilizing facts and figures.

Figure 7:2 demonstrates in a flyer passed out during SOAS Fresher's events and meetings. The flyer offers a brief background, highlighting that Jammu and Kashmir as a whole is occupied by three states, before highlighting the numbers of victims in IAK, or as it is referenced here Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). The bottom of the hand out includes a quote by an Amnesty International report which asserts that India is responsible for human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. The highlighting of key points through using variation in colour reiterates some numbers found across samples



SOAS Kashmir Solidarity Movement

- Kashmir is the oldest **unresolved International Conflict** in the world
- The Territory of Kashmir remains divided as:
 - Indian Occupied Kashmir (**IOK**): Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh
 - Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (**POK**): Azaad Kashmir and Northern Areas
 - Chinese Occupied Kashmir: Aksai Chin (Part of Xinjiang) and Saksham Valley (Part of Xinjiang)



- In **1948** Jawaharlal Nehru (then Prime Minister of India) took the case of Kashmir to the UN and promised to resolve the dispute through a Plebiscite
- 67 years have passed** since then, but none of the stakeholders involved seem to have the willpower to resolve the dispute according to the wishes of the people of Kashmir Territory
- In IOK, the systemic violence of the State has resulted in **disappearance of 8000+ persons, 70,000+ deaths, 6000+ unknown, unmarked and mass graves**, and countless cases of torture and sexual violence.
- There are more than **700,000 armed forces** stationed in IOK currently.
- An Amnesty International Report titled, "Denied: Failures in accountability for human rights violations by security force personnel in Jammu and Kashmir," (2015), states '**India has neglected international obligations and its own constitution by ignoring human rights violations allegedly carried out in the name of national security in Jammu and Kashmir state.**'




Figure 7:6 Flyer for KSM SOAS distributed during early semester events in 2015

used by activists when describing the intensity of the Kashmir conflict. Of further note, is the discrepancy in numbers in the first flyer and the second, although of consistency is an overall number of killed that is often purported to be somewhere between 70,000 and 100,000. An earlier flyer shown in figure 5 distributed by KSM Edinburgh in 2013 claims

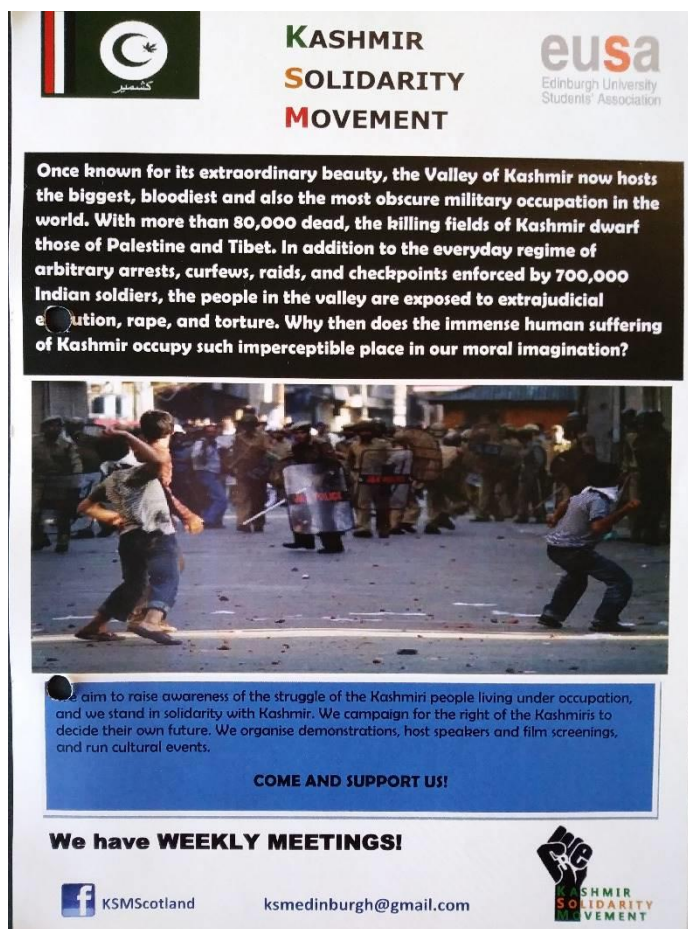


Figure 7:7 KSM Edinburgh flyer handed out during events in 2014

the number killed is 80,000. What is consistent here is the number of Indian soldiers, claimed to be 700,000 in both Edinburgh and SOAS handouts. What is interesting to note about the flyer from 2014 is that it not only demonstrates the relevance of Kashmir to other movements, but it claims to be worse than either Tibet or Palestine. It is unclear whether this claim was strategically abandoned in later advertisements, but it is clear these comparisons are strategically made in an effort to appeal to human rights activists across a range of campaigns and movements. To this effect, strategies have been adopted

that not only raise awareness about the struggles of ordinary Kashmiris, but also to honor the memory of Kashmiris by offering specific examples of people who have suffered, often at the hands of security forces who act without care of legal discourse. This sort of connection makes it possible to mobilize in support of Kashmiris who are treated unjustly while the inevitably desired territorial resolution seems out of reach for the moment.

Muzzammil Thakur, president of the World Kashmir Freedom Movement and frequent guest speaker at KSM events in London, expressed his interest in bridging the divide between those experiencing human rights infractions on the ground and the larger politics of solving the territorial dispute of India and Pakistan (KSM Meet and Greet 2015). His frustration regarding the traditional resistance leadership in JKLF has been expressed at a talk at Kings College London in February 2016 and later in an article in Al Jazeera whereby he claims that the youths are questioning the leadership as ineffective (Kanjwal,

2016: 4). Working with youths in Kashmir and abroad – and being a relatively young man himself – he and others have expressed grief at the lack of progress made at ending injustices in Kashmir. Unlike other presenters at events which are more academic in nature, who rely on PowerPoint slides or pre-written essays for talking points, his talks may be perceived as more shocking. They reflect personal experience, first-hand testimonies, and graphic images of dead youths, which he acknowledged can be shocking but necessary to fully understand the crisis in Kashmir. Although there is not a clear leader or group strategy for today's contemporary (transnational) azadi movement, Muzzamil's strategies, I argue, are rather representative of what the movement would like to be: activism and straightforwardness over high politics and academic dispute. Muzzammil had embraced a transnational approach to the Kashmir freedom movement, with special emphasis on raising international awareness, connecting the struggles between IAK and diaspora abroad through frequent travel between countries, and seeking justice for those who have suffered. Like pictures meant to move an audience to empathy, his Twitter feed is an open letter for modern Kashmir activism with its posts and re-posting of videos, pictures, and articles which juxtapose tragedy with hope. Joined by academics and activists, he spoke in London again on the United Nations International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2016 for an event by the Justice Foundation – Kashmir Institute of International Affairs (KIIA), another affiliation of his. The event was publicized by SOAS KSM on Facebook to 'highlight the gross human rights violations taking place in Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir by more than 700,000 modern day armed occupational forces.'

Holding an event that highlights torture and abuse on International Human Rights Day or on the missing or disappeared Kashmiris on an International Day of the Disappeared and exposing incidents of rape on or around International Women's Day largely represents a slightly different approach to mobilization than simply observing days of historical significance to the azadi cause. Mobilization surrounding symbolic 'black days' by staging strikes on notable days of importance for Kashmir's freedom movement are largely observed, however they represent a more ethnically or regionally-aligned (Kashmir or South Asian) context. By holding events on days recognized and celebrated globally, again it highlights the desire to frame the Kashmir cause in the context of international norms. Whenever there is an argument based around the rights of

Kashmiris, from the right of self-determination to human rights, women's rights, and legal rights, there is a clear attempt to contextualize the experience of Kashmiris to experiences of a more global community of legal advocacy and activism. Professional advocates such as lawyers, NGO and NPO workers, journalists, academics, activists, and seasoned activists of all sorts are the backbone of the transnational Kashmiri freedom movement. They connect the home-grown advocacy groups with a global audience and generally provide the structure and facilities that make mobilization outside (and it could be argued inside) of Kashmir possible. As the occurrence of injustices in the world far outweighs the occurrence of social activist mobilization, there needs to be not only a subjective component, or framing of the issue that provides for the alignment of ideals in order to mobilize, but there also needs to be some kind of structure in place to facilitate action. This goes beyond the physical location or ICTs that provide these resources for protest calendars or promoting events. This chapter first reviews literature surrounding legal advocacy and activism in Kashmir with a focus on recent trends and studies. This literature is located within broader literature on social movements and ethnonationalism, with the focus on appeals to identity markers and framing these in legal advocacy. Secondly, this chapter then moves to an analysis of data gained from interviews and discussions with activists and analyses the types of KSM events, who is attracted to them and why. Finally, this chapter discusses how in-group activists are drawn to mobilize around legal advocacy as it can offer a source of closure. Meanwhile, out-group activists (non-Kashmiris/South Asians) respond to legal advocacy as concrete ways for achieving success and/or contributing to a movement they empathise and support. Universalist framings and discourse around legal activism thus permits for a bridge between in-group and out-group activists and a stable way to sustain mobilization efforts.

Legal Advocacy and Interpretations of Kashmir Activists

Human rights, broadly interpreted, can be applicable to many aspects of the Kashmiri freedom movement. As interpreted by individual activists and defined in memos and publications by the groups themselves, human rights in some form is widely used as a meta-frame. But here, I would like to home in on the aspects which are even more explicit in regard to legal framings and terminology as expressed in interviews with respondents.

In many of the discussions with activists, it is clearly obvious that legal advocates and legal framings of the Kashmir freedom movement have had an impact on how the movement is perceived and interpreted by activists. Some of the comments may overlap with themes of victimization, but the purpose here is to highlight where the respondents have emphasised and used particular 'key' words such as *impunity* and *justice*. Use of such language is seen as a strong indicator that human rights and legal advocacy are reasons to participate in KSM activities. This further indicates the general framing of the Kashmir azadi movement as a movement which is akin to seeking justice and attaining closure for victims. Essentially, respondents have, in their own words, diagnosed the problem, attributed blame, and then offered some way to fix the problem. As it is often perceived that justice for Kashmir and Kashmir being under Indian control are mutually exclusive, the solution is often that Kashmir should become an independent entity.

Salena, who was born in PAK but has lived in the UK most of her life, has been present at the majority of meetings and events since Edinburgh KSM had begun. In March 2015 when I conducted an interview with her, she had claimed in response to my question regarding the most important issues in Kashmir:

'I definitely would have to say torture...and more importantly, I think there needs to be an investigation of an independent body from a human rights organization like Amnesty and they would find out there's torture happening, about the rapes that took place in the 1990s – to bring justice to those raped and the mass graves that came out needs to be dealt with.'

The issue of justice and closure is very near to those who have spent the majority of their lives in IAK. A male respondent from IAK who worked as a journalist offered a more personalised story when discussing these questions. For him, justice is a personal matter based on experiences he has faced throughout the 1990s. He separates himself from some of the other members of SOAS KSM in that he is a bit older than they are and has spent his first 25 years in Kashmir. In response to asking him why he participates in KSM, he replies with reference to his experiences returning home after being away for work:

'...it's ironic that as soon as I reached the place I lived, I needed to recharge my phone...in a shop where this counterinsurgency guy came in and was harassing the shop keeper. That incident rejuvenated that anger within me. It's about justice! It's about what is right!'

This story is but one account of Irshad's experiences. He expressed resentment over the heavy presence of military forces in Kashmir, which affects everyday activities. Something as simple as charging a phone can become connected to an encounter with security forces. These encounters represent more than a nuisance for Irshad, who also recounted experiences of processions of people when a person is killed in his locality where 'thousands were coming out.' He also informed me that 'half' of his family was deported from Kashmir 'because they were considered pro-Pakistan.' When moving on to why he felt others were moved to participate in KSM events, he felt they were for similar reasons as for himself participating. Like many other respondents, he referred to the human rights situation. He further referenced the continued suffering of the Kashmiri people. Unlike the young woman from Pakistan who expressed sympathy for their suffering, his voice was filled with expressions of resentment at how his Kashmir has changed over the years: '...when I go back I see people traumatized...the kind of anger I saw in people...before people were still laughing and smiling and warm to each other – that no longer exists. The whole aura is like that.' Moving from accounts of his personal experiences, he then frames some issues surrounding police accountability to what is perceived to be a common practice of extortion:

'My uncle was telling me about the PSA and stuff about the police...The police would pick up a guy - a student - would pick him up and their family would come based on a suspicion...[sic] and still tell their families they were caught and that there was evidence against him, so if want to save your son can still work out something with the station officer. Give us 20,000 rupees and we will try to save him. It's a sort of extortion, then the family would be sure this child doesn't remain there, they would be sent to the Middle East or somewhere else in India and police will target someone else. The Police station is notorious in doing these things, families that have the financial capacity will lend to people, to friends. It becomes a business.'

This is still in response to the question about what motivates others to participate. Again, qualitative interviews can lead to more tangential discussions, but there does seem to be a conscious effort to relate his personal accounts to the publicised draconian laws and how this affects Kashmiris on the ground. His experiences reflect upon his return to Kashmir after being away for five years and his perception about the situation is in relation to that as well as accounts from his family who becomes an authority on Kashmir matters in his absence about what is going on – in this case his uncle – who reports to him a bleak situation about the abuse of power by the police. In his account, the diagnosis goes

beyond the morality of police officers who purportedly abuse their power and blame is attributed implicitly on the PSA which permits the abuse of power.

Solidarities

Zeeshan, and others like him, recount their traumatic experiences and will often compare them to Palestine. Although they recognize the trauma that those in Palestine may face, there is a sense of indignation at the apparent ignorance of Kashmir trauma. When asked why he attends KSM events, it leads back to not just his personal suffering, but the purported fact that the suffering of Kashmiris goes unannounced.

‘...mostly people they know about the [Kashmir] issue, but nowadays there are different issues about world so our voice is still in bottom now. In Afghanistan, there is a war they didn’t lose as many people (as us Kashmiris). We lost almost 6000 people in this period if you compare us with Palestine, we lost more life. Second, I am Kashmiri, I am a victim that’s why I try to go everywhere and hope people will talk about us.

In this sense, the international reach of the Palestinian freedom movement is something that Kashmiri freedom activists hope to emulate. Raising awareness about the suffering of the Kashmiri people goes hand-in-hand with gaining advances towards a resolution of Kashmir. If people know what is going on there, they will be moved and want to take action, just like those active on Palestinian campaigns. It also acts as a sort of protection or buffer for Kashmiri activists. One presenter who suggested that Kashmir didn’t have enough international attention claimed that ‘one stone in Palestine can’t be moved without the world hearing about it.’ If there is more pressure on the Indian government, perhaps there is the possibility of reform. If the world will not tolerate abuse of Kashmiris, the logic follows that the security forces must curb their tactics for more nonviolent approaches.

Non-Kashmiris were likely to be involved in rights-based campaigns such as lobbying against anti-terrorism legislation or participation in anti-racist demonstrations. Two of those interviewed also expressed empathy with the Kashmiris as an oppressed people. One of these people, Jay, claimed that his family experienced oppression living in India as a minority Christian faith. Being a minority ethnic and religious group, he

shared empathy with their cause, and was drawn to the society both as a means to reconnect to his South Asian heritage, and as an expression of solidarity for minority groups in India.

Another young woman, Fatin, expressed empathy for Kashmiris as someone who has faced prejudice as a Malay in an international school.

'I didn't join societies back home. Some of them were prejudiced against Malaysians...Here [in the UK] I feel like they are more open-minded to me. I studied at an international university, so most of my friends were from South Asia or the Middle East.'

Fatin did not have the opportunity to participate very much in societies due to her demanding schedule, but she chose to come to a few meetings at KSM Edinburgh, which to some extent, may reflect how she prioritized the cause of Kashmir. She was also a strong advocate for a free Kashmir. She felt that it was Kashmiris' best interests to have their own state to avoid further persecution.

How people collaborate and identify with one another was seen beyond the university at other types of events. Attending protest rallies, it is easily observable which groups cluster together. During an anti-Modi demonstration in London in (November 2016), I observed the pro-freedom group Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) standing close to a contingent of pro-Khalistan demonstrators. In a brief conversation with a Sikh woman attending the event, she told me that they view their - Kashmir and Sikh - cause as similar to one another and therefore offer one another support. Forming a unique bond around shared experiences of suffering has the power to deepen the sense of solidarity found between two otherwise distinct groups. This is a common find across all sources of data; online, field-based in the UK, and my visit to India. Even very tenuous links can be highlighted and rallied behind. This can bridge the gap even between police officers and protesters in a conflict where everyone has experience loss of one form or another.

There are a few advocacy organizations inside of IAK. These organizations and agencies often take inspiration from international organizations, are influenced by them, and often affiliated in some way to them. However, like many indigenous organizations, they are always negotiating between personalized cultural repertoires and those

repertoires inspired by other movements and agencies out-with IAK. The Association of Parents for Disappeared Persons (APDP) Kashmir, founded by the mother of a disappeared son in August 1990, Parveena Ahangar (Butalia, 2002), is probably the most well-known and publicized rights organization outside of Kashmir. The APDP has now become a symbol of the contemporary movement for justice and closure in Kashmir. It has also provided a structure for women to mobilise who would not have otherwise have the facilities to do so. Parveena, a purported 'illiterate housewife' in literature and by a KSM speaker as well was turned into a 'political agent and key mobilising figure in the revival of civil society political activism for peace' Best and Hussey (2005: 12). SOAS KSM in particular had strong links to organizations in IAK and promoted and raised funds for APDP at their events. On 30 August 2015 they held an event with a public display in central London regarding enforced disappearance of Kashmiris. In publicizing the event, they proclaimed, as often is referenced in other events. One post summarizes the condition of enforced disappearances in IAK and the role APDP has: 'Since 1989 it is estimated that over 10,000 Kashmiris have been [sic] disappeared by the Indian state. APDP Kashmir work hard to document these cases and their loved ones' (SOAS KSM Facebook 19 August 2015).

Contention and Resolution

Although it was the general consensus that Kashmir should be free from India, there were alternative interpretations of the what azadi for Kashmir should look like. One man from IAK who was not a student, but a professional came with his wife to one of the meetings at KSM SOAS in February 2016. He claimed that in the beginning, even before Partition, he would have worked to make the country one India rather than a separate India from Pakistan. He claims that the Partition complicated matters and was a catalyst for religious and sectarian divides. Now, he claims, if India left Kashmir, it would leave Kashmir vulnerable to Pakistan or Chinese interference: 'If India leaves us...Pakistan would raise an insurgent army and the Chinese borders are so sensitive because Kashmir doesn't have the capacity to defend itself and the country so we need Indian soldiers to defend the streets and border...' However, he further commented on the 'irony' of relying on Indian soldiers to defend Kashmir because they are there to protect the people but that 'the Kashmiri people get caught up between two gunmen: militants in uniform and

soldiers.’ He claims it is innocent people that suffer and would like to see a Kashmir where people of all faiths can live in peace. What is most unusual, however, about his interpretation is that he not only asserts that ‘it doesn’t matter if we are divided into smaller parts and someone else comes in to occupy’ but he claims the best solution is ‘to work to make India and Pakistan one country so we don’t fight over a small piece of land and Kashmir will be OK because we will be one country.’ Reuniting India and Pakistan, for him, is the best long-term resolution for peace for Kashmir. Although he did not address feasibility, he does raise an interesting argument that posits the main cause of conflict in Kashmir is due to the separation of Pakistan and India and rejects further separation as an all-in-one resolution. He claims empathy for people’s pain at losing loved ones, but also seems to be more positive than most respondents that Indian reforms could lead to Kashmiris living a better life, thus reducing the need for an independent state.

The voice for the reformer of Indian Kashmir is often overshadowed by the strength of the voices claiming that Kashmir can only achieve peace within its borders if it rids itself of India, perceived as an occupying force. The strength of this perception is often related in the way in which Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) is often referred to as Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) in discourse and in literature. Activist perspectives will often refer to Kashmir as occupied territory on the Indian side, Pakistan side, of both.

PAK or POK? IAK or IOK?

KSM Edinburgh and KSM SOAS were established in 2012 and 2014 respectively. There is sometimes assistance offered in the setting up of a branch of KSM by committee members of other KSM Societies, but as each branch is generally autonomous. Kashmir Students Campaign UK does not seem to have any more than casual connections. There is not a singular united manifesto and the correspondence between the groups is rather limited to sharing events on one another’s Facebook groups. Without a clear line of communication, there is no board or overarching head of the groups that dictate the sorts of images and language permitted in official email correspondence with members or on printed materials such as fliers and posters hung up during events and meetings. It is therefore up to the individual branch to determine its own official discourse or to simply

make the decision to not have an official stance. It was the desire for KSM SOAS to have an officially recognised term when referencing the Indian side of Kashmir.

On 30 October 2015, KSM SOAS held a meeting whereby the second item on the agenda was 'Discuss KSM Policy on usage of 'occupied' vs 'administered'. And other terms that can be controversial.' Although there were a few other items on the agenda, the IOK versus IAK discussion sparked the most heated debate. Nine people were in attendance, including myself and a representative of the Palestine society at SOAS, whom sided with those in favour of using the term 'occupied,' with a clear similarity drawn between the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the Indian occupation of Kashmir. Those in favour of using Administered over Occupied were in the minority. The official count after voting was: two for administered and six for occupied, with myself abstaining. To use the term occupied in official documents, as one member pointed argued, would make it appear as though there was an inherent bias in the group toward India, but not Pakistan. One of the committee members agreed that as most of the events did focus on the Indian side, there was danger of this. However, she argued that officially there are 'three *nuclear* powers all occupying Kashmir. Kashmir is occupied by [sic] Pakistan, India, and China.' The argument is nuanced in such a matter that although many freedom supporters would agree that Kashmir is occupied by multiple countries, there is special emphasis on India being the most at fault. By continuing to refer to Indian Administered Kashmir as Indian *Occupied* Kashmir, there is, as one attendee noted a danger of only attracting those who were already 'converts' to the Kashmiri freedom movement. People could be automatically put off by the usage of the term occupied. A non-Kashmiri Indian in attendance retorted that Indians would be turned away rather than feel welcomed to events. In a later interview with him, he elaborated on the feelings that Indians would feel unwelcome at the event. As a non-Kashmiri, 'I felt I had no voice.'

The non-Kashmiri Indian was joined by a Kashmiri Indian in as a dissenting opinion. His argument was less on the possibilities of exclusion as they were with others viewing the freedom activists as unbalanced. Coming from a background in journalism, his argument was that the term administered should be used for both Pakistan and India. Not appearing biased or unbalanced was not a strong enough argument for those in support of 'occupied.' One person claimed that even journalists used the term occupied, and there were no problems associated with its use. Another person argued that by

describing the situation in Kashmir as an occupation better represents the ‘truth on the ground,’ that this is the view that society uses in general. He further purported that the KSM were not journalists nor academics and therefore did not need to remain balanced. It should be noted that I have personally taken the stance that referring to the territories as administrative districts is indeed the best possible position I can take as an academic, and I am therefore continuing the use of IAK and PAK. This is not meant to vindicate or vilify any party, but rather a simple designation of the actual designated control of territory on either side of the LoC.

Despite the adoption of the term ‘occupied’ officially, KSM members and guest speakers alike both continued to use the terms occupied and administered rather interchangeably. The very first handout I received when visiting the group’s Fresher Fair stand in September 2015, there is a section titled ‘Issues in Indian-held Kashmir’ and another slightly smaller section below it titled ‘Issues in Pakistan-held Kashmir.’ The prominent placement of PAK on the first handout most prospective supporters receive that year can be perceived as a stance of KSM SOAS that they mean to represent perceived suffering and injustices on both sides rather than on the one. Equally, KSM SOAS’s Facebook page claims that the society ‘will focus on the entire region in Kashmir from Pakistan-Controlled Kashmir, to Indian-Controlled Kashmir and Chinese-Controlled Kashmir.’ Although the subject of the meeting was regarding the ‘official’ usage of occupied versus administered, in practice there is no clear reconciliation of the matter. What is clear, however, is that the majority of participants agreed that it was reasonable to use the term occupied as for them, this is a clear reflection of the reality of the situation.

In the official fliers of KSM Edinburgh, there is no great emphasis on PAK. There is certainly no praise for Pakistan in the fliers, as they point to Pakistan’s ceding of a tract of disputed territory to China, the failure of both Pakistan and India at implementing UN resolutions, and they blame both countries for lack of resolution of Kashmir which has led to a ‘conventional and nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan bleeding their economies’ (Kashmir Conflict Timeline, 2014). Despite the relatively equal blame for the lack of resolution, KSM Edinburgh does not tend to refer to the part of Kashmir administered by Pakistan as ‘occupied’ territory. There is equally no avoidance of the issue as there are no marked attempts to place the issue on the agenda. The dialogue for both societies tended to lean towards the majority of PAK being under the

administration of Pakistan but relatively autonomous with the exception of the Northern Areas or Gilgit Baltistan which are now fully under the administration of Pakistan. This area (excluding Gilgit Baltistan) is referred to in texts and echoed during meetings as Azad (Free) Kashmir. There is a general sense that 'people over there live free,' which is contrasted with the current state of IAK where there is a presence of large numbers of military personnel, curfews, checkpoints, and bunkers. From everyday drudgery to the periods of tension that naturally occur when there are high levels of military stationed in an area, the feeling of being occupied would logically lead to resistance of the occupying force.

Conclusion

SOAS KSM certainly had less troubles in attracting a crowd. As with Edinburgh KSM, their first objective was to raise awareness about the ongoing conflict in Kashmir and the perceived military occupation. However, they were also interested in going beyond raising awareness and striving to see practical ways forward. During the week of events in February 2016, they were to have one event at the end of the week which would discuss these things. An advertisement was made on Facebook asking for interest, but it was suggested that it was by invitation only. When I inquired about the event, I was told I would not be able to come and observe the event as I have come to the other meetings. It would be difficult to know if any specific measures may have been discussed, but certainly it would seem to have been the direction the group was heading towards when it was time to leave the field. This society is certainly positioned well in London and affiliated with a university well-known for student activism. The position of the society in a hub of activism of London and of SOAS makes it more likely to be sustainable for a longer duration than KSM Edinburgh, which was no longer active as of 2018. The close proximity of a larger diaspora population makes it more likely to be able to promote the KSM to members of the diaspora, but this was not the most strategic goal of the group. The aim of reaching out to an international audience despite the closer proximity of a larger South Asian community was evident in the attraction to KSM by other campaigns and groups in the university community. Despite the clear aim to raise awareness for KSM to non-South Asians, however, there was clearly a large South Asian presence in

meetings and at events. Further, the group was able to draw upon its London location to bring in members of the academic, activist and diaspora community for speaking engagements that KSM Edinburgh just did not have access to.

CHAPTER 8

Human Rights and Political Issues

The introduction of this thesis introduced the puzzle of relying on ethnonational interpretations of a conflict which, after preliminary investigation appeared to be an asymmetrical conflict between an overzealous security apparatus and a largely nonviolent collective mobilisation of Kashmiri civilians. I was also curious by the willingness of those with no stake in the outcome of such a conflict to be such fervent supporters of Kashmiri azadi. What I found under my period of investigation that made the Kashmiri struggle for independence more internationally known were when the activists framed their fight for self-determination as a human right. This was easy to do given the recent attempts to document all those who have experience torture and other abuses by security personnel in IAK such as the report *Alleged Perpetrators* (Imroz et al, 2012). Disappearances, violations of women and mass graves have been documented and Kashmiri activists and legal advocates on their behalf have been trying to seek justice despite the draconian laws of PSA and AFSPA, introduced previously in this thesis (47). There are a lot of legitimate reasons to support a free Kashmir independent of India, given these abuses are more likely to happen under an aura of occupation, as asserted by Osuri (2015) and Azra (this thesis, 107). Legitimate reasons for Kashmiri pro-freedom activism are overshadowed, however, when the troubles in Kashmir are blamed on Pakistan interference or 'misguided youths' (Choudhary, 2010).

This chapter analyses how the Kashmir freedom movement has now become expressed as a human rights movement, and how it is now becoming widely viewed as a human rights issue by not only Kashmiris, but a broader international audience. In particular, I begin this chapter with an overview of the Kashmir movement as a human rights movement through the perspective on some of those I have spoken with in Kashmir, by reflecting on reports widely distributed, and the distribution of images denouncing human rights abuses in Kashmir on social media, available in English and to a wider, international audience. I reflect upon the fear sown by decades of conflict, curfews, and daily lives interrupted by violence and occupation. I analyse how Kashmiris, as victims, enable the use of a victimization frame in order to reach out to a sympathetic

audience, but also how they use resistance as a means to reclaim their agency. Although this was already revealed in chapter three with special attention to women's human rights sub-frame, this chapter focuses more on victimization as a collective memory scholastically, and later offers empirical evidence from my own research. I further look towards the ways that framing techniques help to bridge the gaps between advocacy and activism. Legal framing of the Kashmir issue connects to Gamson et. al (1982) injustice frames, introduced in this thesis (90) and discussed in relation to advocacy witnessed during fieldwork in London (chapter seven). These tactics of framing are not concrete, but malleable and there is overlap with intersectional motivations for supporting azadi, which is discussed at the close of this chapter.

The Kashmir freedom movement as a human rights movement

The first introduction many people have had to KSM has been via a film viewing. The film most widely screened since the KSM as a university society is the BBC documentary 'Kashmir's Trails of Torture.' The documentary cites very specific examples of torture and shows Parvez Imroz, a human rights lawyer, traversing Kashmir and taking testimony of torture survivors. Many of the incidences of torture from interrogation during the 1990s were very visible. Older men are missing limbs and still carry burn scars and scars from other types of injuries sustained under internment. One of the more popular memes shared on Twitter during the 'Twitter Storm'²² advertised by Kashmir Students Campaign UK for 27 October 2014, with the hashtag '#27octblackday' depicts one of Imroz's respondents, Qalandar Khatana.

²² A 'Twitter Storm' generally refers to attempt to flood Twitter with a large quantity of posts bearing particular hashtag labels. In this case, transnational activists called for a Twitter Storm of #27octblackday in order to raise awareness or draw attention to the human rights abuses in India. 27 October 1947 was the day that the Instrument of Accession was signed which signified, for many activists, the day Kashmir became occupied by India.



Figure 8:1 'Face of Human Rights in Kashmir', shared on Twitter 27 Oct. 2014

Khatana's case represents, perhaps, one of the more disturbing cases of torture that was experienced during the height of the militancy. In the film, he details how parts of his fleshed was removed, seasoned with chili, and that he was forced to eat it (*Kashmir's Torture Trail*, 2012). This was not the limit of gruesome details of torture in IAK relayed in the documentary. There were other tales, some originating during the heights of the insurgency such as Khatana's as well as less gruesome, but nonetheless disturbing incidents that have occurred more recently such as two young men who suffered abuse during detention after posting pro-freedom slogans on Facebook.

Fear and Loathing in Kashmir

Surinder Oberoi (2001) describes the state of false normalcy in Kashmir that came once the threat of militancy began to die down in an article 'Fear and Loathing in Kashmir.' The article emphasises that even when things in Kashmir seem to be going well, there is an acute sense of anxiety. Between two nuclear-armed neighbours and the omnipresent military and sandbag bunkers dotted throughout Kashmir *mohallas* are constant

reminders that Srinagar is a city far from normal. Although the militarized state of Kashmir is intended for the long-term security of the nation vis-à-vis Pakistan, the use of security forces for domestic oppression increases the sense of insecurity among Kashmiri citizens and delegitimizes India as a democratic state. The sense of fear and insecurity felt by Kashmiris and relayed specifically during interviews is striking considering the initial intention of such a show of military posturing is meant to protect one's country from external threat – be that an official incursion of Pakistan's army or an unofficial incursion of Pakistani-supported militants. Oberoi (2001) writes about fear and loathing in Kashmir in the context of a waning, but still active militancy – a time when Kashmiris were tiring of violence. Militants had proven ineffective at ousting India and India and Pakistan seem unwilling to compromise on any long-term solution. Average Kashmiris suffer the long-term effects of living under these conditions and fear reigns in their hearts.

It is a common occurrence to juxtapose children playing sports or innocently walking past a protest when they are caught in the crossfire. During the summer of 2010, more than fifteen years after Zeeshan's recollections, the incident that really kicked off the spiral of protest and subsequent retaliation by security forces was the killing of teenage student, Tufail Ahmad Matoo, who was walking home from a park when he was fatally shot in the head with a teargas canister.

During my own visit to IAK, I met with two young men who were both detained on separate occasions after attending a protest. At the time, there were both college-aged and considered to be 'youths' in their younger twenties. Rafi describes how he was uprooted from his home in the middle of the night in August 2010. At the police station, he reveals that:

'They beat us in the police station and asked for the names of other people there, but everyone was in the street. I didn't know them. When they weren't happy with that, they beat me some more. After two or three months I was released.'

Farooq, the other young man, was arrested while attending a protest also in August of 2010. He claimed that he was in the same area near a hotel that's known to be a trouble spot, The 'Gaza of Kashmir.' Farooq had heard of a nine-year-old boy who was killed in his locality, but this time he was there protesting the killing of a 16-year-old boy. 'I knew him. He was killed in shelling, by a tear gas shell. He was deliberately shot. He was playing cricket in a stadium nearby...' He also verifies his experience of being beaten and

recalls the indiscriminate detention of boys 'some as young as eight, nine-year-old boys on up I've seen in custody.'

The meeting with Rafi and Farooq was arranged and facilitated by a senior journalist of a prominent newspaper in IAK. He expressed concern over the consequences of exposing young Kashmiris to physical and mental harm which may pursue some of them to retaliate by taking up arms:

'People are killed – they're crushed at the receiving end. Agitational terrorism will happen when peaceful means don't work...When they impose curfew, you don't know how many days you won't get essential commodities. Basic facilities are not provided to citizens. The situation in Kashmir not cosy, but has declined. 60% of the population has PTSD and other psychiatric problems. They have witnessed horrible things. Hundreds of people have been killed; there have been so many blasts. This has a big impact on someone 19 years old.'

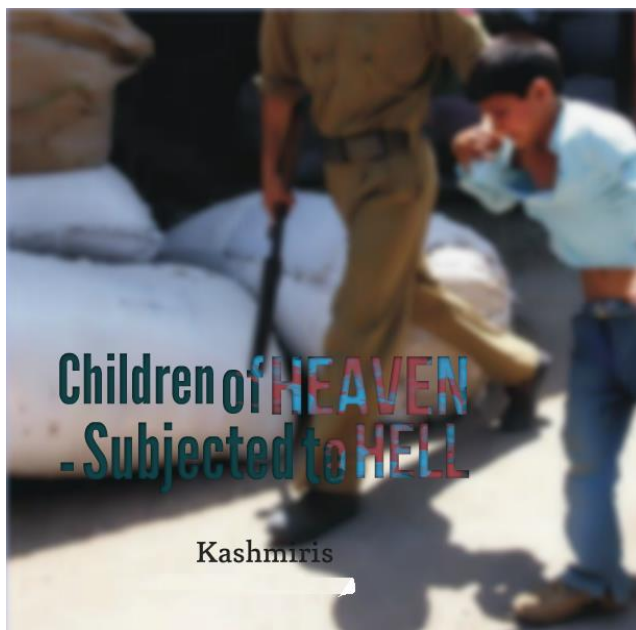


Figure 8:2 Indian soldier leading Kashmiri boy Facebook post April 2013

Here journalist 'M' discusses how PTSD and psychiatry problems are not a consequence of any single incident, but the experience of many hardships over time. From the feeling of being trapped in 'the most beautiful prison' to the experience of loss of loved ones, friends and neighbours collectively create an eternal state of fear. The things that the journalist had to emphasize in our discussion is reinforced in social media postings.

On the KSM Edinburgh Facebook site, a post was shared with an accompanying photo which states 'Children of Heaven...Subjected to Hell.' Just weeks before meeting with the journalist on 25 April, 2013, an excerpt from the post reads:

'There are even reported cases of 'Forced Sodomy' in these police stations which were filmed with phone cameras...Sometimes these children are put into prisons with fugitives and criminals which puts them under greater danger. The psychological trauma that is thrust upon these teenagers is immense (Kashmir has one of the highest rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD))

These teenagers are the future of our nation which has been under severe militarization (Kashmir holds the World Record For the Highest Militarization). And protesting against this military occupation would be an obvious thought of any growing up kid. But in Kashmir they are branded as 'agitational terrorists'.

Here is an emphasis on the experience of trauma by young people, and again a repeated reference to high rates of PTSD and branding peaceful protesters as 'agitational terrorists.' An image of a man in military uniform leading a child accompanies the post. Although it is not quite clear what is happening from the image alone, the framing of the message implies that the child is being harassed in some way. As with the other messages, it again is suggested that there are few options to alleviate suffering in Kashmir, especially for the young. Using an appeal to the human rights of children and a call to end their suffering, again the diagnosis of azadi is reiterated. Everyone has lost someone. A police officer I became acquainted with during my trip to Kashmir explained to me how he lost his sister after she was in the vicinity of a bomb exploded by a militant group in the early 2000s. She was only 18. The individual stories of Kashmiris who claim to have experienced traumatic events is endless.

Most of the people I have spoken with have been fortunate enough to avoid detention or torture, despite the constant and imminent fear of this. Rafi and Farooq, however, provided an opportunity in my short visit to hear more details about the experiences of detained youths since the summer of 2010. Together, the two recount similar conditions during their time in jail. Rafi began by saying that 'in jail, you are limited to only 60 Rupees a day to arrange everything...' 60 Indian Rupees is roughly equivalent to just over 60 pence, or about one US dollar. Rafi says it is not enough, save on the occasions you can get food from home. The journalist present went further to protest the conditions of jail by emphasizing that during the winter, the conditions were more difficult. 'There's no proper heating...and in the summers it's too hot, small, and not hygienic.' This latter point emphasized a comment made previously by Farooq who recalled that in the summertime, prisoners are shifted to Jammu which the journalist claims is 'the hottest place in Northern India.' To exasperate the discomfort provided by the heat, Farooq also chimed in by saying that there are as many as 'six or seven people in one jail cell' and he reflected that you had to remain there after 5pm. Rafi concurred and added that the dimensions of the jail cell were approximately '10 by 12 feet for six people and they all

have to sleep on the hard ground without beds...just some blankets and sheets.' It was not just the lack of food or clean bedding or the heat or the mosquitoes that disturbed Rafi and Farooq. Both claimed to have experienced beatings. Rafi agrees with Farooq when he announced that 'They tie up your legs and arms and beat you with sticks. This continues for days...' Rafi sums up his experience in jail by comparing it to a concentration camp: 'Once you are put behind bars, it's a closed case. You're screams can't be heard by anybody – it was like a concentration camp.'

Since my own background knowledge in torture stems from studies on the Russian gulags or from the BBC documentary 'Kashmir's trails of torture,' I probe a little further in the specifics on the abuse, requesting the two to only tell me what they feel comfortable with. It is relayed to me that although there are some specific techniques such as rollers being used on some of the prisoners and others suffering from being burned or electrically shocked. For the two respondents, however, they claimed to mostly suffer from constant beatings. Rafi claimed, 'They give you just enough food to keep you alive. They keep you in a dark room so you don't even know when it's light or day.' I inquired whether they were prevented from sleeping during the time spent under interrogation. Rafi replied, 'They beat you so much, you can't help but sleep.'

Many of these reports of abuse come from or are about youths. However, equally victimized are perceived to be the innocent Kashmiris living along the LoC who suffer not from preventive detainment or disappearances, but from cross-border shelling between India and Pakistan. I did not spend enough time in Kashmir, nor would I have been permitted to enter the border region, to gain a significant sample of interviews with the rural residents of IAK. I did, however, have the opportunity to speak with one. I met Nazir Ahmed at the Bemina Rehabilitation Centre outside Srinagar in Kashmir. After a tour of the spinal injury unit where one woman attends due to a bullet injury, my translator and I were led to the limb replacement facility. Nazir Ahmed, a labourer from Churanda near the LoC who lost his right leg from the knee down because it had to be amputated due to sustaining injuries from cross-border shelling. He was simply in the area, he claimed, when he was shot from the Pakistani side in 2000. Finally, in 2013, he was to be fitted with an artificial limb. It was a very happy day for him, but there would be no compensation or reparations for his suffering, loss of limb and stable employment from Pakistan or India. It was the international Red Cross that sponsored his artificial limb after thirteen years

without. In the conversation with him with the help of a translator, I discovered that his area near the border, a sparsely populated mountainous region of only around 230 people or so – nearly 20-30 people have also suffered loss of limb and a similar number of people have lost their lives over the years due to cross-border shelling between Pakistan and Indian forces. It is his hope that a permanent solution for Jammu and Kashmir would end this. As for any political preferences, he is a ‘simple man’ and has ‘no such political leanings.’

Nazir confirms that for people living in rural communities, especially those so close to the LoC, they are not so concerned with the political, territorial resolutions of the Pakistan-Indian conflict, but wish that they can carry out their lives unhindered by the conflict, where one stray bullet can mean life or death, or loss of limb and livelihood. Although Nazir is not an activist and his recollection of personal experiences seem just as likely to be exploited by social movement entrepreneurs or shared in activist circles, stories such as these are rarely shared. Access to more remote and rural areas, especially those close to the LoC are highly restricted. For the time being, I can only hypothesise that there are many other stories similar to Nazir’s that could serve to better understand how the conflict affects lower classes and rural communities who are often left underrepresented in activist circles.

Practical Implication of living under occupation

Earlier in the meeting with the Rafi and Farooq, the senior journalist, Abdul, refers specifically to the PSA and AFSPA as being abused by security forces and as the ultimate cause for so many unwarranted arrests during the protests of 2008 (against land transfer) and the summer protests of 2010 and 2011. Abdul, like many other advocates, uses numbers to illustrate the severity of the situation: ‘There were huge protests...they suppressed them heavy-handed...110 youths were killed [in 2010]...the second aspect is that 7-10,000 – ‘officially’ 4000 behind bars.’ Abdul further contextualizes the impact of these arrests by saying that the youths’ lives are ‘shattered’ since they cannot join government services or seek permission to travel. Many of the youths, he explains, have their passports taken away and they are not permitted to work in the government sector. The latter is particularly important since the government sector jobs are the most lucrative

for college graduates and offer the most reliability since government employees are paid regardless of whether there is a curfew or strike in Kashmir, a frequent occurrence and the bane of private industry in the state.

My friend and contact in Kashmir, Sharif, highlighted this aspect when he portrayed his commute to work. He worked in a university in another part of Kashmir to his home and he claimed that if he left work late, he would be stopped at a checkpoint and not be allowed to enter his home district. I had also referred to him previously as jesting about opening a McDonald's in Kashmir. He maintained that if it weren't for the curfews and strikes, investments such as fast food franchises would be a good idea. It was not possible under occupation.

Private business and everyday livelihoods suffered due to life under occupation. Obtaining a passport in Kashmir can have a myriad of obstacles, as Abdul mentioned. The problem is so pervasive that it was subject of the documentary by Ashvin Kumar *Inshallah Football* (2010). The main character of the documentary is a young football (soccer) player who is accepted to train at a prestigious academy in Brazil. He is barred from obtaining a passport, however, because his father was a former militant. After much lobbying, the student is eventually permitted to travel. The film also reflects upon the youth's father, who had rejected militancy and was now a successful entrepreneur in Kashmir. Without having the option to obtain government employment, he had to enter the private market and against difficult odds, he managed to be successful. Both of these facets were reported by Abdul, the journalist I spoke with in IAK. He suggested that issuing passports and restoring the right to take government employment in Kashmir were key issues which could be addressed to alleviate some of the suffering young people face growing up as children of conflict.

Victimization Frames

Discourse from activists involved in Kashmir's freedom movement alternate between narratives of victimhood, survival, and resistance. The framing changes as well from praise for non-violent forms of resistance to praise for more disruptive and violent forms of resistance. The roles of those who resist in the Kashmir freedom narrative is complex and fluid, subject to emerging events and individual actors' and subsidiary groups'

perceptions of the actions taken in relation to emerging events. The somewhat circular narrative usually begins with accusations of widespread and systematic torture by Indian security forces, encapsulated in the well-distributed report, *Alleged Perpetrators* (Imroz et al, 2012). A post on Kashmir Solidarity Movement Scotland's Facebook page dated 15 December 2012 reads:

'JAMMU and KASHMIR: Leading human rights groups release new report examining 214 cases of human rights violations and, for the first time, the role of 500 alleged perpetrators in these crimes...Cases presented in this report reveal that there is a policy not to genuinely investigate or prosecute the armed forces for human rights violations.... On the contrary, alleged perpetrators of crimes are awarded, rewarded and promoted by the State.'²³

Reports such as *Alleged Perpetrators* (2012) and documentaries such 'Kashmir's Trails of Torture' (2012) serve the dual purpose of reinforcing the communal, social suffering of Kashmiris as well as to highlight this suffering in an appeal to gain sympathizers with the victimized Kashmiri. In social movement studies, this is more generally conceived of as a sort of framing process – here the human rights frame. But digging deeper into the development of the human rights frame, we can identify the more abstract constructions of the trauma experienced that leads to victimization. This then must lead to the mobilization of a popular movement to construct an appeal for resisting the victimization. Without broad appeal, there would be no acknowledgment of the oppressed peoples. The human rights frame offers a ready conduit with which to make suffering known to a wider public.

One way to elevate the human rights of a community is to portray the community as suffering as a whole. Fassin and Rechtman (2009) purport that trauma should be understood both in the 'restricted sense' as it is widely used in the mental health field as well as its 'more widespread, popular usage (an open wound in the collective memory)...' (2). Trauma can be experienced as an individual or as a nation; as a psychological shock or as a tragic event widely covered in the media (ibid.). The authors survey the experience of trauma in contemporary settings ranging from psychological debriefings in local

²³ The quote additionally provides a link to the article for their readers to access easily: 'Alleged Perpetrators: Stories of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir' is available at: http://kafila.org/fullreportallegedperpetratorsstori...

settings such as industrial accidents, hostage situations, and incidences of school violence to trauma experienced more collectively through natural disasters or significant terror attacks such as 9/11. Fassin and Rechtman explore how a community of people can come to perceive their people as victimized, rather than just their person:

‘The slave, the colonized, the subjugated, the oppressed, the survivor, the accident victim, the refugee – these are concrete images of the vanquished whose history, far from disappearing along with their experience of defeat and misfortune, is reborn in the memory of subsequent generations’ (2009:16).

Collective remembrance happens gradually, though academic and perhaps more so through survivors’ accounts as was the case for addressing the trauma of the Holocaust. The authors assert the Holocaust has become somewhat of a paradigm for collective trauma. To summarize, the Holocaust acts as a representation of extreme violence followed by a period of silence which is commonplace after traumatic experience. The link between the collective and the individual is the heart of the politics of trauma: ‘the collective event supplies the substance of the trauma which will be articulated in individual experience; in return, individual suffering bears witness to the traumatic aspect of the collective trauma’ (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009: 18). A testament to the greyness of victimhood, collective trauma is referenced for both the people of Israel as well as the people of Palestine, who have undergone prolonged exposure to conflict, and as many would argue, occupation by the Israeli people. In addition to receiving medical supplies by INGOs such as Doctors without Borders, there is regular and often quickly deployed psychological counselling or debriefing, which the authors imply is a reaction to traumatic events in Paris as much as in the West Bank. These experiences of psychological trauma and the reactions to traumatic events permit for the empathizing of one community for another, as there is a connection made between traumatic events experienced on an individual level and traumatic events experienced on a collective level. Fassin and Rechtman (2009) assert that there is a connection between culture and psyche, arguing that ‘the collective event supplies the substance of the trauma which will be articulated in individual experience; in return, individual suffering bears witness to the traumatic aspect of the collective trauma’ (18).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), often referenced in handouts and documentaries on Kashmir, assist in framing the Kashmir experience of trauma as

collective experiences. The PTSD classification, adopted in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association includes a wide range of symptoms which were previously referred to as 'shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to responses in both human and natural catastrophes' (Caruth, 1995: 3). The broad adoption of circumstances and lack of precise definition point to the limits of the field surrounding trauma. Despite these difficulties, Caruth does offer a description of PTSD which is generally agreed upon:

'there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event' (1995: 4).

Although acknowledging these generalities, Caruth also attempts to veer from the notion that trauma is mere repression of memory, but that it is a temporal delay in the experience of the event, permitting for the survival of the traumatic experience (1995: 10). The immediate act of survival of the trauma permits for the bearing witness of the trauma. Caruth reflects upon the survivors of one catastrophe addressing survivors of a catastrophe of another culture, such as survivors of the Holocaust or of the bombings of Hiroshima. She claims that this 'speaking and this listening...from the site of trauma does not rely...on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don't yet know of our own traumatic pasts' (1995: 11) She continues by claiming that: 'In a catastrophic age...trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history...' (ibid.). It is with these connections that individual and collective histories of trauma are understood and may be reflected upon in contexts that extend beyond a narrowly defined conception of trauma. The bearing of witness and the listening to survivor testimonies permit for the empathy of others. Within the context of a transnational movement, the dissemination of testimony can be more efficient. I would argue that this dissemination, especially from one perceived trauma survivor to another – as in the Palestinian or Kurdish activist to the Kashmiri activist – assist in not only gaining sympathizers from various causes, but can also be a source of healing for the survivor of trauma.

Public reaction to traumatic events can be a source of solidarity among disparate organizations and causes. However, there needs to be public acceptance that the wrongdoing is actually something that we ought to care about. Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (2001) examines the similar dimensions between domestic and sexual abuse and the trauma experienced by war combatants. She traces the development of studies on trauma to Freudian psychoanalysis and other European studies on 'hysteria,' deemed to be a 'female' problem in the 19th century. Herman argues that as there was no popular women's rights movement until later on, findings on links between sexual abuse and PTSD were disregarded. Later, during the First World War, trauma and PTSD studies were revisited in the context of war combatants who suffered from what was called at the time 'shell shock.' Again, trauma was seen as a feminine experience, one that perhaps emasculated the male. As there was a will to publicly study the experience of trauma and what would become known later as PTSD, it was able to be accepted by the academic and medical communities, rather than tucked away. It is suggestive, and I would purport that the examination of the male suffering from trauma was taken more seriously during the very public war than female trauma, which was confined to a much more private sphere. As Herman asserts, it was not until women's suffering became much better known in the public sphere during the 1970s women's liberation movement that the relation between sexual trauma and PTSD could finally begin to be explored in earnest. She further asserts that 'the study of psychological trauma is an inherently political enterprise because it calls attention to the experience of oppressed people' (Herman, 2001: 237).

Social movements relying on the public engaging with victims of trauma, I purport, can permit for the adoption of the human rights frame. The identification of those suffering from trauma, whether men drafted to fight a war or women who have been sexually abused can all be perceived as oppressed people. But acknowledgement of the suffering of people does not automatically equate to public engagement or mobilization. Again, referencing Herman, the mobilization of people in promotion of the elevation of oppressed peoples is linked to a 'global political movement for human rights [which] could ultimately sustain our ability to speak about unspeakable things' (Herman, 2001:237). The question that arises for outsiders to a conflict for those bearing witness is whether they will side with the victim or the perpetrator. This is not a matter of not sympathizing with victim

testimony, but a refusal to speak on behalf of the victim. 'It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing...The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystanders to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering' (ibid.: 7). If there is an absence of a lapse in bearing witness, this will inevitably lead to forgetting.

Kleinman et. al.(1997) also address historic memories of suffering. On the South Asian subcontinent in particular, historic memories of collective suffering are shared traumatic experiences of the partition. Collective memories of partition have been enshrined in popular movies, arts, and literature but only in the last few decades, purports the authors, memories of historic suffering become of interest in the social sciences. The horrors of partition cannot easily escape historical memory. A conservative estimate of a quarter of a million people died as a result of partition-related violence and a further estimation by the Indian Constituent Assembly of 33,000 Hindu or Sikh women abducted by Muslims and an estimation from Pakistan of 50,000 Muslim women abducted by Hindu or Sikh men (Kleinman et. al.,1997: xv).²⁴ The resultant violence of partition has led to nationalistic historical readings by Pakistan and India which read like story narratives complete with heroes, villains, and a plot (Bannerjee, 1998). Rather than an interpretation of South Asians suffering from the subjugation of British colonialism which could have a solidaristic effect, the interpretations were of communal suffering of Muslims and Hindus; Pakistanis and Indians.²⁵ In a strategic effort, communal suffering could be exploited for political gain. In another context, recognition of victimhood can be exploited for mobilization and for garnering support for a cause. As Kleinman and Kleinman discuss in a deliberation on the moral ambiguities of the role of the photojournalist capturing images of famine in the Sudan, the issue of sympathy can be a double-edged debate whereby lack of ability to care for oneself may increase the ability to gain moral and financial assistance, but may also be a denouncement of a victim's agency. Self-labelled victimhood is a contentious tactic. On the one hand, to label oneself as a victim threatens

²⁴ This may be a low estimate. Elsewhere, Veena Das cites as an early estimate of abducted women from both sides of the new borders as 'close to one hundred thousand' (1997: 67)

²⁵ Although time and space constraints do not permit for further analysing this thread, the ways that the creation stories of India and Pakistan have been exploited and framed to produce pro-India and pro-Pakistan narratives through histories favouring the subsequent nations. An example of this is Krishna Kumar's (2002) *Prejudice and Pride*, which shows how either nation permanently sowed the seed of hostility through narrative constructions.

to endanger one's agency. On the other hand, labelling oneself as a victim can be perceived as a strategic political tool for evading blame. 'Victimhood can be a prime way of suspending or attempting to suspend the political through an appeal to something non-agentive and "beyond" or "before" politics, such as poverty or suffering...' (Jeffery and Candea, 2006: 289). For political entrepreneurs or for those activists trying to increase international awareness of their cause, there is a difficult balancing act between gaining sympathy while retaining dignity.

Victims and perpetrators may be contentious and mutable categories and were particularly blurred during the early 2000s. However, as the insurgency waned, it made it much easier to perceive the Kashmir people as the victims. They were the victims of militants, the victims of Indian and Pakistani posturing, the victims of security forces, and even the victims of media portrayal of Kashmiris as extremists. Fassin and Rechtman's processes of addressing communal trauma is a first step in the process of mobilizing a community of victims. Recognition of the victimized community as legitimate and bearing witness provides for a sustainable movement, assuming that such a movement may be deemed 'acceptable' and in a context which resonates with larger movements. The human rights frame provides just the context necessary for outside activists to find resonance with victimized, inside actors.

Framing of Legal Advocacy

The adoption of frames of social movements on the grounds of human rights and other progressive, universalist values have been adopted by many of the world's nation-states and is enshrined in national legal documents as well as international legislation. One of the most important documents for relating the rights of one's nation to the universalist conception of human rights is the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights as adopted by the UN General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (un.org). This document has been adopted by most of the countries in the world. However, the signatories to the declaration have adopted sections piecemeal. On the one hand, the document is often referenced in conjunction with international norms of rights for all people in the world but is limited in the interpretations of individual nation-states. As an example, the article forbidding torture was not ratified by states as different as the United

States and India; and, this continues to be a hotly debated topic today. It is, however, referenced as the *norm* even if individual states have not adopted this particular article. Just as international legal documents are referenced when framing arguments opposing torture, illegal detention, and other crimes as violations of human rights, national documents, bills, and articles have been referenced in order to bolster the argument of the legal advocate and the social movement entrepreneur alike.

Martha Davis (2011) sheds some light on how legal representation of public interest groups translate activist discourse into legal discourse; and, how this legal framing is adopted and adapted by activists in everyday parlance. Legal framing of issues such as welfare and poverty are rather salient in western democracies, especially the United States. Davis notes how the framing of welfare, for instance, ranges from 'government entitlement' to 'handouts' and how these frames are reflected in not only public opinion on the matter, but in 'litigation strategies, complaints, briefs, and judicial opinions' (2011: 365). A legal advocate can become an invaluable and ad hoc spokesperson for a social movement, adding a sense of legitimacy and offering a professional avenue for influencing opinions. 'Sometimes deliberately and sometimes unintentionally,' she reports:

'lawyers have played a role in the framing processes of social movements. These processes are the means by which movements set boundaries and construct shared understandings concerning their methods, visions, and goals' (Davis, 2011: 363).

The contribution lawyers can make to social movements is an invaluable resource for not only progressive litigation tactics, but because it allows them to engage more directly with social movement groups, relating 'clientele' experiences to broader, transnational norms of human rights. Human rights provide a strong platform within which to mobilize whether located in the global north or the global south and can provide strong transnational mobilization linkages between movements.

Recurring themes in discourse stemming from minority communities in South Asia surround democratization and rights to representation. Dalit communities have mobilized in protests but have also focused efforts to gain direct access to Parliamentary processes. From in-group activists, there may be more abstract concepts to mobilize such as dignity and closure from past transgressions against members of their communities. But for

reaching outward to transnational communities, there may be a greater sense of urgency to frame their movement in terms of human rights. Such cases of movements grabbing international attention are those such as the Dalit movements in India. Dalit, stemming from the Marathi term to refer to the 'oppressed or downtrodden' have mobilised in support of forcing the government of India into implementation of democracy to all peoples. Hugo Gorringer (2005) found that there were over being 70 different Dalit factions across the state. However, some common themes seemed to emerge from his research than could have led to an increase in solidarity among various factions. One was the theme of dignity. As Gorringer reports, many of the activists he worked with claimed that their struggle was 'vital to establishing their dignity as human beings' and further that society could only be liberated through Dalit equality (2005: 114).

How a lack of dignity as perceived to be a local grievance translates into the more universalist 'human right' is a topic Bob Clifford (2007) visits. Although it is pointed out that Dalit concerns have become internationally recognized as an international human rights concern by the late 1990s, it was previously not treated as a human rights issue by the United Nations or other NGOs (Clifford, 2007: 168). Clifford purports that one of the leading causes for internationalization of the caste issue was the growing number of Dalit civil society activists that were located not just within South Asia but also abroad. Initially, their successes were rather limited, but these advocates certainly did get the conversation started in international organizations and arguing the international significance of local discrimination at international conferences and fora. Clifford argues that it was a Human Rights Watch report written by Smita Narula, a Harvard-educated lawyer, that had the biggest initial impact which led to sustained domestic and international mobilisation against Dalit oppression (2007: 178). The Human Rights Watch report, *Broken People: Caste violence against India's "Untouchables"* (1999) outlined the subjugation of the Dalits and purported that much of the abuse by higher-caste groups and police was sanctioned or ignored by the state. The publishing of the report precipitated more grant funding, resulting in the capacity for more international advocacy and lobbying of the UN as well as the Indian government to amend international declarations and the national constitution to reflect legal recognition of caste-based discrimination. As this example illustrates, legal advocacy offers a bridge for domestic activists to reach an international audience, often with reference to more universalist

language which may not always be expressed in such terms prior to the transnationalisation of a movement.

The foremost goal of KSM has been raising awareness about the suffering of Kashmiris. In raising awareness of the suffering of Kashmiris, victims' experiences are highlighted and present as human rights abuses. Universal discourse that is shared with global solidarity and rights movements is used in order to present the injustices in terms that are easily grasped by a broad range of interested constituents. This is a framing process that describes the condition of Kashmiris through diagnostic and prognostic framing techniques which permit for the victimization of Kashmiris and the vilification of India, especially Indian security forces stationed in IAK. The way issues are framed are often reactionary to events and events are often utilized as a means to support sympathizers and the Kashmir diaspora to mobilise. After an event is framed in a particular way to mobilize, more specific actions may be called for. This may involve campaigns and strategies drawn from a transnational protest repertoire that may be familiar to a broad range of activists and may involve:

- Letter writing or sending of postcards to government representatives, officials, or agencies
- Picketing in front of government buildings and offices
- Shouting slogans, reciting poetry, singing or playing protest songs
- Public demonstrations or marches, often accompanied by speeches and placards
- Public art or photo exhibitions or publicly located graffiti (often in English)
- Social media campaigns such as 'Twitter Storms' or online petition distribution

The call to action is again often framed in a universal discourse of justice and rights and draws in a variety of supporters from a cross-section of affiliations and campaigns. The interactions between insider and outsider activists redefine the Kashmir freedom movement, including redefining contemporary Kashmiri culture through the lens of rights, justice, and resistance. The emphasis on resistance takes on new meanings as not only resisting a perceived Indian occupation, but the perception of oppression from some traditions which may be perceived to be out-dated. Of special note is the women's resistance, which expresses itself not only as a resistance to Indian occupation but as resistance to patriarchy. To essentialize here, resistance is the answer to reclaiming agency and the only perceived way to do that is by achieving independence from India.

Plebiscite and Right to Self-Determination

One of the most common themes across all samples of interviews and re-visited during meetings are the right to self-determination as a human right which is commonly referenced in international forums such as the United Nations and repeated by activists for self-determination of Kashmir, Tibet, Palestine, Scotland, and others. The most common terminology used in Edinburgh in 2012-2013 and highlighted in interviews was the term 'plebiscite,' which has been commonly used in activist literature on Kashmir, in academic literature and encapsulated by the Plebiscite Front, one of the first well-organized non-violent attempts to lobby for the implementation of the UN mandate for a plebiscite. All Kashmiris are familiar with the UN mandate for a plebiscite and regularly breach this as evidence of right to self-determination and hotly contend that India has been denying Kashmir's rights through not implementing the plebiscite. Since 2014, it has become much more common to refer to the plebiscite as a referendum – the same discourse used to describe the legislation which would see Scottish become independent. The referendum, which took place but did not pass in September 2014 was and continues to be used as exemplary evidence of how to democratically resolve long-standing territorial issues. As a small sample of the shift in usage, the term 'referendum' was more widely used across all samples (interviews, events, and workshops), however, the term 'plebiscite' was more frequently used at events with older activists with some ties to the JKLF. Students and youths had much more of a preference to use the term 'referendum.' This could be because it was used more often in the UK and the term 'plebiscite' could have seemed to be more antiquated; or, it could be a way to consciously relate the Kashmir freedom movement to Scotland's movement for separation from the United Kingdom. Richard, an organizer for SACC, regularly collaborates with minority communities in Scotland, and addresses the recent call for a referendum in Scotland and its relevance to Kashmir. He claims that campaigning 'in and around the referendum in Scotland became such a strong focus for political activity...' and that 'KSM made the point that Scotland has had their referendum and India has systematically over 60 years refused a referendum for Kashmir.' Although Richard acknowledges that Scotland has not been under the same sort of oppression found in Kashmir by India rule, he does emphasize that it brings the opportunity for campaigning around the issue.

The key distinctions between the campaign for an independent Scotland and the campaign for an independent Kashmir, or Tibet, or Palestine, is the perception of the residents of the latter territories to be under occupation. The presence of a large force of armed personnel makes on the streets of Kashmir, the presence and nuisance of checkpoints and curfews, makes for a compelling case for independence. The logic is generally that Kashmiris cannot experience freedom or enjoy democratic rights under such imperilled living conditions.

Intersectional motivations for supporting azadi

The first chapter of this thesis examines how competing narratives regarding the azadi movement have led to the case that the azadi movement may have prior to 2008 been perceived as more based on identitarian claims than on human rights and justice claims. I further this thread in chapter five by examining ethnic, national, cultural, religious, and solidarity identities. These identities overlap, and indeed I made the argument that for the purposes of transnational mobilisation, it may be a solidarity or a new cultural identity that may emerge as more salient than individual identities. Indeed, collective mobilisation means that one must find solidarity in a cause or campaign that supersedes (or is not indirect conflict) with individual identities. This does not mean, however, that ethnic, national, religious, or other individual identities do not have an influence on decisions to support or oppose a movement. Identities are fluid, complex and there is never an easy way to measure the impact of individual identities. I will do my best in this section, however, to discuss some of the findings of this project regarding the impact of these individual identities to support group, or collective identities.

A Resistance Identity

One of the events held by KSM Edinburgh that was mentioned in chapter three was called 'Cultures of Resistance,' which showcased Kashmir poetry, Sufi dancing, songs of resistance, and also had a speaker which discussed Palestinian resistance. Resistance, for Kashmir, Palestine, Tibet, and other societies often represented at these events has become a part of one's culture – just as traditional dance or literature. Photo exhibitions and protest art and cartoons are regularly featured at events and displayed on social

media platforms. SOAS even hosts a 'cultures of resistance' scholarship for foreign students to come study in the UK, with Kashmir a 'high priority country,' (KSM SOAS Facebook). There is a sense of camaraderie with students supporting other self-determination movements on campus, with Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at the University of Edinburgh and the Palestinian Society at SOAS providing moral and technical support in addition to offering a reliable pool of like-minded, sympathetic participants to the other groups.

As Dibyesh Anand, a University of Westminster academic put it, he came to Kashmir 'via Tibet.' As academics or journalists may come to find linkages between case studies, activists easily find connections between campaigns. Several of the committee members of KSM Edinburgh also held committee positions in other societies. Aside from Isoc, the most referenced societies were the ones related to 'cultures of resistance,' most notably the Palestinian societies. There were frequently held joint events at both sites for Palestine and Kashmir, and it could be argued that the Palestinian cause is perhaps the most influential cause on the contemporary freedom movement. It can be further argued that the desire to bring in an international audience is due to the popularity that the Palestinian movement enjoys abroad, which brings international attention. During presentations the comparison between Kashmir and Palestine is often made.

Zeeshan, who is represented in the chapter already on KSM SOAS and others like him, recount their traumatic experiences and will often compare them to Palestine. Although they recognize the trauma that those in Palestine may face, there is a sense of indignation at the apparent ignorance of Kashmir trauma. When asked why he attends KSM events, it leads back to not just his personal suffering, but the purported fact that the suffering of Kashmiris goes unannounced.

'...mostly people they know about the [Kashmir] issue, but nowadays there are different issues about world so our voice is still in bottom now. In Afghanistan, there is a war they didn't lose as many people (as us Kashmiris). We lost almost 6000 people in this period if you compare us with Palestine, we lost more life. Second, I am Kashmiri, I am a victim that's why I try to go everywhere and hope people will talk about us.

In this sense, the international reach of the Palestinian freedom movement is something that Kashmiri freedom activists hope to emulate. Raising awareness about the suffering of the Kashmiri people goes hand-in-hand with gaining advances towards a resolution of

Kashmir. If people know what is going on there, they will be moved and want to take action, just like those active on Palestinian campaigns. It also acts as a sort of protection or buffer for Kashmiri activists. One presenter who suggested that Kashmir didn't have enough international attention claimed that 'one stone in Palestine can't be moved without the world hearing about it.' Despite the seeming apprehension here, I did not get the overall sense that people were upset with Palestinian activists. They simply seemed apprehensive that they were getting more attention than Kashmir suffering. They also saw the Palestine movements such as SJP at Edinburgh as opportunities for solidarity. The two campaigns could benefit and support one another.

Almost as a means of explicitly stating the solidarity among cultures of resistance, SOAS formed a consortium group duly named 'Oppressed Peoples in Solidarity.' As labelled on their Facebook page, the group is 'A committee made up of representatives of SOAS Tamil, Kurdish, Palestinian Societies, and the KSM, working together to build bridges and unite' (2015). The Facebook group appeared to only hold one explicitly joint function, which was collecting donations for refugees stranded in Calais; but, it has shared major events of the other societies in the consortium in addition to publicizing ongoing developments through sharing articles and re-posts. This then brings this analysis to the next point on sharing a sense of solidarity based on being a perceived minority or other subjugated group.

An 'Other' Identity

Kashmiris whom I interviewed had no reluctance to attesting to being drawn to the KSM or being prompted to start a new KSM group because they are Kashmiri. One of the questions I asked in my interviews was 'How much influence is you're being Kashmiri/South Asian on your decision to attend?' The response was mostly as anticipated – Kashmiris were absolutely motivated to participate due to them identifying as Kashmiri. One respondent from KSM SOAS responded:

'Of course it will impact! That's why we started the society. It's a personal case, a personal thing. We want to tell people the story of your life and want to raise awareness of Kashmir. No one can do that better than themselves.'

As many of my respondents from KSM SOAS were themselves Kashmiris, this response was echoed by other respondents. Another member of KSM SOAS responded similarly:

[Being] Kashmiri has a lot of influence, especially in the UK, a lot of people don't know about Kashmir so it fuels my motivation to change it. I think being Kashmiri has everything to do with it. With a lot of other conflict around world so similar to Kashmir has a lot of engagement with no personal reason to, but a lot of people that are involved (in Kashmir) are Kashmiris themselves.

For 'Sami,' being Kashmiri also has a major impact in getting involved in the society. Sami also addresses an underlying issue, that other conflicts similar to Kashmir have 'a lot of engagement with no personal reason to.' When I probed further, again Sami uses Palestine as an example of a cause people are involved in but have no affiliation to.

Other responses to the question of how much influence being Kashmir has had on wanting to attend events or become involved in the society were along similar lines. If they were Kashmir, this was definitely a reason, but they also expressed an interest in other people unaffiliated directly to Kashmir to become involved in a show of solidarity. There were not so many active Kashmiris abroad that they could sustain a movement or have impact without non-Kashmiris knowing about the Kashmir conflict. For many Kashmiris, it was their duty to inform them.

This brings this discussion to the strategy of how to gain support from non-Kashmiris for a Kashmiri cause. The notion of an 'other' identity has been addressed at various times throughout this thesis. I first drew attention to this in the introduction on social movements and reflect upon pre and post partition mobilization in response to being treated as a subaltern vis-à-vis Dogra. The subaltern status of Kashmiris are again brought up in relation to Indians in the Quit Kashmir and Plebiscite Movements and continue to be a rallying point in response to election interference which led to massive protests in 1989. Being a subjugated minority explains, at least in part, motivations for joining the militancy in the 1990s, but also explains the call to militancy today for disaffected youths such as Wani. Being a subaltern is a facet of emergent identities in the new Kashmiri freedom movement and it is reflected in master frames which make a connection between minority subjugation and mobilizing for human rights in Kashmir. In the discussions on legal advocacy, it becomes clear that the rule of law does not apply to all Indian citizens equally. So long as PSA and AFSPA remain, they give legal impunity

to those security officers who abuse their powers and attack innocents. Young boys and girls as well as older men and women have been subjected to torture and rape and Kashmiris suffer PTSD at alarming rates along with scars and blindness from pellet guns.

Chapter five shows how Kashmir suffering can be related to other peoples' suffering and how this has the capacity to become a mutual rallying point for mobilization. Kashmiris suffer as do Palestinians and Tibetans, for example as oppressed and occupied peoples. But further, we see solidarity around minority. Kashmir Students UK, for example, posted regarding issues of minority underrepresentation in UK universities, asking 'Why is my professor not black?' Asian youths in the UK have a history of standing in solidarity with one another, but also with blacks as well, in a common effort to fight racism in the country. Similarly, Kashmiris as Muslims have come together with other Muslims in the UK to fight 'anti-terror' legislation such as Prevent which unfairly targets adherents of Islam. Islam was not a significant reason for one Christian respondent who I interviewed, however, who attended KSM meetings because his grandparents were targeted for being Christian in Hindu India.

Having an identity as an 'other' is an important, and I will argue *more* important signifier of wanting to support another movement whereby its adherents also identify themselves as 'others.' Ethnic and other traditional identity markers may impact one's influence to participate, but they do not sustain the movement. The movement must be sustained through those framing tactics explored previously. Frame alignment tactics, explored in the introduction of this thesis is a tactic used inevitably for drawing in a wider, more diverse spectrum of activists that can further your own cause. This, thus defines the distinction between an ethnonational and a social movement.

Conclusion

Transnational legal advocacy and activism serve as the link to bridge the gap between those who mobilize because they believe themselves to be oppressed and those who mobilize on behalf of the oppressed. The adoption of frames of social movements on the grounds of human rights and other progressive values have been adopted by many of the world's nation-states and is enshrined in national and international legislation. Even

where not adopted entirely, they are referenced as international norms. These international standards of rights are then used by legal advocates and activists when framing arguments opposing torture, illegal detention, and other crimes as violations of human rights. Somewhat generalising, advocacy can assist in the portrayal of human rights abuses in Kashmir by Indian security forces. Attributing blame to Indian security forces permits for the prognosis of the problem being Indian occupation of Kashmir. The general solution is independence from India. Although the motivations for wanting an independent Kashmir may differ somewhat between immediate stakeholders and out-group activists, the framing of abuses in Kashmir in this manner lead many to conclude that azadi for Kashmir is the logical conclusion.

So many people from so many different backgrounds are interested in a free Kashmir. This is not based on identity affiliation to the Kashmir conflict in all cases, but is based on some other overarching identity. In this chapter, I proposed that framing the Kashmir conflict in terms of human rights and specifically utilizing injustice and victimization frames permits for the mobilisation of those in affiliated campaigns. Some campaigns that also may be viewed as affiliated may be for a free Palestine or Tibet, but other this logic has the capacity to extend to other liberation movements and movements against patriarchy. Framing protests, stone throwing, or simply being outspoken against Indian occupation can lead to an identity of resistance that serves both to reclaim agency for the victimized Kashmiri but also to bind other campaigns together. Kashmiris may feel an obligation to participate or start KSM societies, but they see their cause as a fight anyone can join in. They spend a lot of time earnestly trying to educate people about the Kashmir conflict and the suffering of Kashmiris. They do well to compare their movement to others and will align and support other resistance movements. As a consequence of this, a sort of 'other' identity emerges for the Kashmiri freedom activist. Kashmiris may see themselves as subjugated and oppressed minorities and may also be in support of other minority movements. An 'other' identity, that of a subaltern or minority is a powerful means of presenting kinship among those that would otherwise not be perceived as kin biologically or ethnically. This has the ability to bond movements such as black rights with the rights of Kashmiris. KSM has honed this relationship through participation in Black History Month and other campaigns aimed at ending discrimination of ethnic or religious minorities. These strategies, in turn, facilitate the reaching out to a greater international

audience, but also permits for the resonating of frames from one movement or campaign to the next making the movement more sustainable.

CONCLUSION

Transnational Solidarities and Kashmir as a Freedom and Justice Cause

This thesis has explored the transnational Kashmir freedom movement from the perspective of activists living abroad. These activists, some of them self-defining as Kashmiri, and others not, are raising awareness for the Kashmir conflict and its human toll, with particular focus on the human rights abuses that have been documented as occurring on the Indian side of the Line of Control. These activists have collaborated with other campaigns and stood in solidarity with other movements for similarly aligned causes such as the Palestinian case for self-determination. For freedom activists, they do not perceive themselves as leading a separatist movement from India, but rather a self-determination movement based on human rights. In order to distance themselves from previous literature on Kashmir asserting that their movement is identitarian-based, or from Indian media that the freedom movement is similarly based on ethnic, national, or religious identities of Kashmiris, have framed their movement in terms of human rights. This thesis has explored how Kashmiri freedom activists have framed their movement through engagement with Kashmir Solidarity Movement (KSM) in Edinburgh and in London. This thesis also draws from interviews held in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK) and from social media sources affiliated with the KSM students' campaigns in the UK and in examining promotional documents for the groups. Using KSM as a case study, I have come to some conclusions about the nature of the new Kashmiri freedom movement and how transnational solidarities can further the freedom and justice cause in Kashmir.

Despite the appearance of nonviolent protest tactics and social movement organization and transnational campaigning since the 1930s at least, Kashmir's azadi movement has been marred by the perception of being a movement based on identitarian claims. Kashmir activists who struggle for freedom are pitted against oppression by security forces immune to punishment. Although the freedom activists raise very real grievances against an Indian state, literature stemming from the 1980s militancy in Kashmir reflects the notion that grievances are based on identity markers such as religion

or nationalism. If this is the case, then naturally conflict resolution tactics would be an effort at better understanding how ideological differences can be overcome and compromises can be negotiated. Although ethnic and religious tensions may exacerbate the conflict in Kashmir, the reality of Kashmir's conflict is that it is asymmetric and thus cannot be fixed merely by conflict resolution tactics which resolve to better understand ideological differences of the different actors in the conflict. The Kashmir Valley has very little autonomy to decide for itself how to govern itself. The streets are littered with bunkers and soldiers are active across the region in the tens of thousands. Kashmir is under de facto occupation by the central government of India. The Kashmir freedom activists I have spoken deny that Kashmir is part of India and that peace can only be achieved if the area is demilitarized. Resistance to such an occupation is accordingly justified.

The introduction of this thesis makes these claims as relevant findings. In order to carry out the research that led to these realities, I knew I had to examine the Kashmir conflict in a way that was distinct from previous research. For this, instead of relying on literature that focused on ethnonational identity motivations for resistance to India, or even to diaspora mobilisation which could be rather homogenising in its analyses, I turned to social movements theory. Specifically, I look at examine the framing processes and introduce the uncovered frames as witnessed during my fieldwork. The master frame is a sort of all-inclusive meta-package of human rights. From this stems several frames within this umbrella, outlined in the methodology.

As the historical overview in chapter one reflects, the Kashmir freedom movement is rooted in collective mobilization tactics against the Dogra, and then the Indian government. Historiography is quick to identify how collective action has been made possible through a shared identity of subjugation (Zutshi, 2004; Cockell, 2001), which is a powerful element of motivation for mobilization. However, works such as Malik (2019) offer a revision of history which contemplates more vividly the role of early activists, particularly the critical role that women have played in the resistance movements in Kashmir. After a brief introduction on how this leads up to the contemporary azadi movement, I examine some ethnonational literature more generally. The conflict in Kashmir must go beyond the presentation that it is a battle of ideologies or an India-Pakistan conflict as scholars such as Kaul (2011) assert. Although there has been room for the historical precedent of a unified *Kashmiriyat*, the Kashmir identity is one that has been salient and often in relation to events in the homeland (Ballard, 1991; Sokefeld and

Bolognani, 2011; Robsinson, 2013). Looking towards the contemporary azadi movement, we see nonviolent tactics and displays of solidarity with others struggling for freedom such as graffiti art (Kak, 2017). This is an aspect of a larger movement that sees itself as a freedom movement, often in solidarity with other movements, rather than identity based.

In chapter two, I give a broader explanation of my research questions and detail the methods for conducting research. An initial pilot study with Kashmir freedom activists in Scotland presented a clustering of activists from a broad range of campaigns and causes with seemingly tenuous linkages. This led to my initial research question which explored why such a diverse range of activists were drawn to the Kashmir freedom cause. This chapter outlines my approach to research as one that is intepretivistic, relying on understanding the perceptions of Kashmiris. It also connects this approach to the process of data collection whereby, in addition to a short time spent in IAK, I spent a longer time as a participant observer in KSM at their Edinburgh and London sites. It became clear that Kashmiri's right to self-determination could be anchored to one overarching ideological feature: human rights. The rights frame is a master, overarching link between campaigns. This overarching human rights frame is split into categories which are distinct but sometimes overlap: women's rights frames, victimization frames, injustice frames, minority frames, and resistance frames. Despite how clearly the Kashmir movement linked itself with this growing international activist network of human rights advocates, little scholarship on Kashmir has been focused on the recognition that the contemporary movement can rightly be assessed as a transnational social movement.

Chapter three is where I expand on the new Kashmiri freedom movement, and how it is distinct from previous incarnations of the Kashmir freedom movement. I begin with an overview of the strategies of the new movement, the use of social media to raise awareness for the Kashmir movement and to publicize events in Kashmir and abroad. In addition to the language of English, the new movement uses the language of human rights to express their grievances and to demand attention to their cause and subsequently justice. This chapter examines the role of militarization and its catastrophic consequences on women's human rights. I make the analogy that women's rights as subjugated are linked to the general Kashmiri population as subjugated by India. Resistance to this subjugation is a way to reclaim autonomy and agency over oneself and one's people. Women's resistance has been critical and recently become more dominant within Kashmir and abroad. The youths of Kashmir are using modern tactics

blended with traditional ones in order to resistance Indian rule. Resistance is found in photo exhibitions, song lyrics, as graffiti on walls in Kashmir. The resistance identity has become a part of contemporary Kashmir culture.

Chapter four looked at the internationalization of the Kashmiri movement with emphasis on the more traditional lens of homeland politics, however, connections to other movements such as with the Sikhs and Palestinians have been forged over time. The chapter put into perspective how the Kashmir movement has gone international through a vignette about a vigil held outside the Indian consulate in Edinburgh in 2013. It ends with reference to the Million March in 2016, with rather polemic conditions arising from the march. In juxtaposing two young persons' perception of political party obstruction. There was a greater diversity of campaigns standing in solidarity with one another outside the Indian consulate in the cold for the vigil in Edinburgh. The internationalization of the struggle for a free Kashmir goes beyond a homogenized diaspora. It connects disparate individuals for a unified cause in some way, even if it is only temporary.

Chapter five continued from this as it looks more closely at this development of transnational activism and how this has led to the transformation of identities of the Kashmir activist as the transformation of the movement from domestic to transnational have evolved. This transformation has led to solidarities being formed across groups and campaigns, particularly in the case of student and university involvement and promotion. This chapter looked again at traditional identity markers and how emergency identities have formed that act as a unifying force. In contemporary liberal movements, this is often represented as solidarity. This solidarity between cause is particularly salient when the causes are presented as a minority group standing in resistance to an oppressive force. This has the capacity to unite such disparate causes as Black Lives Matters with the Kashmir movement as is demonstrated by the proliferation of the hashtag #kashmirilivesmatters.

Chapter six is the case study chapter of KSM Edinburgh. Although reference is made throughout this thesis to KSM Edinburgh, this chapter zooms in on the society, its origin, how I came to become a participant observer with the group, and it examines more closely its core issues and strategies.

Chapter seven continues from the KSM Edinburgh as a case to focus on KSM SOAS. As in the previous chapter, I examine its origin, how I became involved, who the

participants are, and what their core issues and strategies are. I further take into account how the group resolves issues.

Chapter eight brings together how human rights is used as a master frame for promoting and raising awareness for the movement and also zooms in on particular injustice and legal frames that also help to concretely connect the movement to other campaigns for human rights and the restoration of justice. Legal advocates work together with activists in an effort to bridge the gap of promotion and attempting to achieve specific goals. This chapter also explores the victimization frame as a means to gain sympathy for the movement. It is also used as a way to raise awareness in the form of documentaries being shown and distributed across countries and further explores the role social media has in connecting activists across borders. I also reflect upon personal interviews conducted in Kashmir with people who have suffered injustices and have become victims of abuse. I connect these individuals to the stories of respondents who have lived in Kashmir and how they negotiate everyday life under curfew and in a state of fear. Out of this, however, emerges resistance identities and the will to stand in opposition to Indian oppression in Kashmir. Kashmiris, in this sense, express hope that their situations – no matter how grim – may some day improve if they keep the pressure on.

Answering Research Questions

What drives people in the KSM to engage in a campaign for a free Kashmir?

KSM has become a transnational social movement which sees itself as a vehicle in the fight for justice for Kashmiris. What drives people in KSM to engage in the campaign for azadi is a mixture of personal identitarian motivation and collective identitarian motivations. Individually, one may be motivated by personal affiliation as a stakeholder in the conflict. Collectively, one may be motivated if they are part of other human rights campaigns or part of an affiliated cause such as self-determination or human rights for another group or minority subgroup. How KSM and its participants have framed their movement in terms of human rights and other sub-frames such as women's rights and minority rights lead me to infer that people in KSM are motivated through more than

personal identity affiliations. This is particularly true of those participants who hold no personal identity affiliation as a Kashmiri or South Asian.

Do they engage because of the identitarian appeal of a free Kashmir or do they engage for different reasons?

As outlined in chapters four, five, and eight on transnational activism and, the internationalization of the struggles, and intersectional motivations for supporting azadi, identity markers are a natural aspect of motivation for participation in organizations like the KSM and for sympathizing with the movement for a free Kashmir. However, overarching identities emerge that transcend ethnic, national, or religious barriers. Solidarity identities are salient for many liberal causes and organizations that generally align with the political left seemingly work often in conjunction with one another. By the KSM aligning itself with liberal causes through framing the movement in terms of self-determination, justice, anti-imperialism and demilitarization, it extends the framing of the movement to one that is seemingly identity-based to one that is based on human rights.

How are Kashmir freedom activists framing their movement in an effort to increase support from an international audience?

Kashmir freedom activists are framing their movement within the master frame of human rights. This extends the movement to an international audience such as other self-determination movements. As asserted in chapters five and eight, there is a more niche version of this rights movement that expresses itself as a minority community resisting a majority power. Sustained acts of resistance such as the Black Lives Matters campaign can empathize and work together with other campaigns who support one another's struggle against oppression by a majority power. For many subaltern Kashmiri, this is vis-à-vis India. This theme runs in a myriad of other campaigns and is also emphasized in the Palestinian struggle for freedom, which already has wide global support. Through alignment with theme campaigns, Kashmir can extend their cause to a broader audience of sympathizers.

Could it be possible that the KSM represents a broader Kashmir transnational activist movement?

This question is difficult to answer more definitively without further evidence from IAK and PAK and perhaps by looking at newly formed KSM groups in the USA and Canada. It certainly would be a point of further investigation. On the basis of my data, I believe that the KSM is reflective of a broader Kashmir transnational activist movement. I have not worked extensively with the diaspora community in the UK. This lack of diaspora active in the KSM is actually supportive of the claim that the KSM is representative more of a transnational movement than of politicking domestically. The aims of the KSM were to engage an international audience, rather than preaching to the converted. This aim was voiced not by long-term members of the diaspora, but by a transient community, comprised of students and activists who often have had direct experience of activism within IAK itself. My two weeks in the valley also indicated that there was a desire for international activism to work in conjunction with domestic activism in order to achieve both long term goals such as azadi but also short-term goals such as the restoration of passports and ending impunity for security force corruption.

Contributions of this Study

This study adds to existing studies of transnational youth movements – a unique focus on Kashmir through the lens of the KSM. The KSM has the capacity to operate on a transnational level which activates not only diaspora representation but reaches across campaigns and causes to recruit participants, raise awareness and gains sympathy from an international audience, thus forming the potential for a larger pool of advocates and allies in their case for freedom. Thus far, studies of transnational solidarity have tended to focus on the Palestinian freedom movement (Abu-Ayyash, 2014) rather than Kashmir. Abu-Ayyah's (2014) framing of the Palestinian movement as a human rights movement and my own findings of the Kashmir movement being framed in terms of human rights contributes to more generalizable theory about contemporary TSMOs. It is increasingly common practice and most likely an effective one to first, transform a domestic movement

into a transnational one, and secondly, frame that movement in terms of human rights in order to gain the largest and most diverse number of participants possible.

What was noticeable in my initial literature review was the lack of literature available on transnational activism from the 'Global South' that is not seen as a relatively homogenous 'diaspora' mobilisation. Social movement studies have looked more at how the activists in one part of the world adopt strategies of activists in other parts of the world but there is a lacuna of specific studies that looks at how disparate campaigns collaborate. Long-term studies on transnational Kashmir youth solidarity movements have been previously non-existent, despite evidence that youth movements have been very active in Kashmir since pre-Partition. Social media drives the visibility of this today and western scholars have been able to conduct some studies regarding activism in Kashmir (Duschinski and Hoffman, 2011; Van der Molen and Bal, 2011). More recently, some Kashmiri scholars have also begun to fill this space (Kak, 2011; Malik, 2019). The transnationalization of azadi activism as studied on the level of this thesis is up to now not available.

The application of framing techniques was done in a microcosm on legal framing (Duschinski, 2009) and focused on developments within Kashmir, rather than activism on behalf of Kashmir happening abroad. Aiming to understand the framing of the movement on a transnational level which is aimed primarily at an international audience is unique to this study. The application of social movement frames to the transnational azadi movement can act on its own as contribution to social movement studies more generally as well. The findings of the sub-frames which are adapted from theoretical literature on social movements can assist in understanding which frames work in which contexts better if applied more rigorously and to other movements. The potential for applicability to other transnational and especially to traditionally non-Western movements is viable. This research, therefore, could progress the study of the transnational azadi movement and also explain how other non-Western movements are adapting their repertoires and frames in an effort to raise awareness for their cause and bring in more participants.

Main Findings of Study

The main findings of this study have been in understanding the ways in which in-group and out-group activists have become motivated to participate in Kashmir's freedom movement transnationally. In-group, or 'insider' activists, those which have a direct stake in any permanent territorial resolution, are more inclined to participate or become motivated due to their direct affiliation with the region and direct stake in the conflict. Out-group, or 'outsider' activists are those who do not have a direct stake and whose lives would not be directly impacted by any territorial resolution. Common ground may be reached among insider and outsider activists and thus they can work together in solidarity to achieve common goals. This common ground may vary as the diversity in affiliations of activists may vary, but common ground is often found with a shared belief of suffering of Kashmiris in addition to participation in a similar cause or campaign. There may also be other regional interests or a general desire to fight oppression or to contest hegemonic power. I have also found supporters to be specifically interested in or active in ideologically liberal causes. Transnational solidarities can help to sustain movements as there is a natural tendency for activism to have reciprocity. The solidarity appeal relies on showing support for one another's cause so that both causes remain sustained, even as individual participation levels ebb and flow over time.

In order to facilitate the sustenance of the movement, it is necessary to involve professional advocates to coordinate with activists, domestically and transnationally. Intersecting discourses and narratives of activists impact one another and thus networks are built upon a diversity of strategies and divergent narratives become more concurrent and complementary to one another. Furthermore, those activists, legal advocates, journalists, and academics that go abroad where they can more freely communicate their dissent against the Indian government and compare notes within and out-with their Kashmiri, South Asian, and heterogeneous professional networks abroad may eventually return to Kashmir. Time spent abroad, even on a one-year study program permits for the kind of activity that is promoted in Western societies and on international campuses that they would not otherwise have the full opportunities to do along either side of the LoC. Specific links and networks are established and maintained abroad when they return home and those seeking to study abroad, say after the completion of a bachelor's degree

in Kashmir may have had the opportunity to establish links via those affiliated to Kashmir universities in their activist networks or simply through social media sites. They may also gain exposure to professional networks prior to studying abroad or upon return. These networks naturally would benefit journalists and legal advocates, for example, but extend also to those pursuing unrelated fields such as engineering or medicine.

One of the strongest connections Kashmir advocates find is in the legal frameworks that outline some of the main grievances Kashmiris have against a perceived imperial Indian state and furthermore offers talking points for advocacy experts and casual activists alike. Although framed in terms of justice and enhancing democracy in India, these notions are translated into the need for closure. There are a few advocacy organizations inside IAK such as the Association of Parents for Disappeared Persons (APDP) Kashmir, which has links to KSM SOAS as well, who have publicised the organization and help to raise funds at KSM events. Likewise links have occurred through the raising of funds for the Kashmir floods which took place in 2014 at KSM Edinburgh through bake sales and also after the showing of *Trails of Torture* (2012) and a presentation on human rights in Kashmir.

Further links are established, but not always actively engaged in specific campaigns. This would be an area of opportunity for the KSM and other groups advocating on behalf of Kashmir justice abroad. *Inshallah Football* (2010) is another documentary often shown to KSM audiences. In that film, it is highlighted that passports are refused to certain youths to travel abroad simply because someone in their family was involved in militancy. When I went to Kashmir, I learned that passports were revoked even for those youths who showed up to pro-freedom protests, who were otherwise not engaged in any other political activities or stone throwing.

In Kashmir today, the children of conflict and other youth generation coming behind them are exposed to curfews, checkpoints, subjected to blockages of food and goods at the whim of the Indian government and are subject to censorship. SMS messages are blocked, and the Internet is routinely taken down in IAK. India touts the line this is meant to prevent rumours from spreading, but the lack of communication with the outside world or knowing if there is turmoil in a neighbouring *mohalla* has people

constantly in fear for themselves and their loved ones. Hardships arising from curfews and *hartals* mean that people may not have access to basic food for days. Checkpoints make it difficult to travel freely from one part of the valley to the next, let alone from one part of the state to the next. This makes it difficult to accept work further away from home and considering the economic hardships of curfews work can be difficult to find. For those having been picked up for stone throwing or protesting as a youth, they can be blacklisted from the best government jobs - even if they are highly qualified. All of these items have the opportunity to allow for transnational lobbying in order to ease some of the everyday suffering of the Kashmiris.

For those Kashmiris who have other hardships such as pellet wounds, PTSD, experience or witness to traumatic events, more support could be made available to them. Groups such as KSM have raised awareness that has brought more international attention to the issues of blindness. They could be part of a wider campaign to end the use of pellet guns internationally as a crowd dispersal method. The role of KSM and other transnational activist groups for drawing attention to the abuses of security forces that have led to the disappearance, torture, rape, and murder of thousands of Kashmiri civilians has been critical to raising awareness for a conflict that lacks the media coverage of other conflicts of suffering peoples. On the other hand, knowing about the existence of a conflict does not lend itself to resolution. Small, small acts of resistance (van der Molen and Ball, (2011) for the domestic and transnational activist can eventually lead to the possibility for at least becoming a more globally known cause. Specific solutions and/or ways to approach lobbying can arise when transnational activists within and among other campaigns can work in solidarity with one another to achieve seemingly impossible ends – even where that end is *azadi*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1a: KSM Edinburgh Meetings and Events

Appendix 1b: KSM SOAS Meeting and Events

Appendix 1c: Encounters in Indian Administered Kashmir

Appendix 1a: KSM Edinburgh Meetings and Events

Date	Meeting	Event	Other
18 October 2012		Film Screening: <i>'Kashmir's Torture Trail'</i> followed by discussion and decision to start society	
21 January 2013	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Speakers - Culture - Collaborations - Awareness raising - Promotion 		
29 January 2013	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Demonstration - Speakers - Collaborations (soc/KSM group) - Awareness raising - Promotion - Lobbying 		
5 February 2013		Kashmir Solidarity Day Vigil in front of Indian Consulate Demonstration in collaboration with other groups, displaying martyrs; lobbying	
8 February		Film Screening: <i>Harud</i> (Autumn)	

27 June 2013			<p>Contribution to 'We Are Kashmir' video</p> <p>Select KSM members went up Calton Hill in Edinburgh and held placards and banners taking pictures as a contribution in a video project</p>
1 October 2013	<p>Planning Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Speakers - Culture - Collaborations - Promotion - Fundraising 		
24 October 2013	<p>Planning Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Speakers - Collaborations (other society and other KSM) - Awareness raising - Lobbying efforts - Charity 		
7 November 2013		<p>Film Screening</p> <p>'Jashn e Azadi'</p> <p>'How We Celebrate Freedom'</p>	
11 February 2014			<p>Virtual Mobilization:</p> <p><i>Twitterstorm</i></p> <p>#FreeKashmir</p>
17 September 2014			<p>KSM Joins rally for Yes vote on Scottish referendum. I could not attend but referenced posts and pictures from event; referendum flyer released</p>

23 September 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Charity - Collaborations (other society and other KSM) - Awareness raising - Promotion (social media/referendum) 		
26 September 2014			Bake Sale Charity fundraiser for floods outside Main Library; promotion of Kashmir referendum. I baked cookies in donation
30 September 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Charity - Collaborations (other society and other KSM) - Culture - Awareness raising - Promotion (social media/flyers) - Discussed my research 		
20 October 2014		Film Screening and Dinner: <i>'Kashmir's Torture Trail'</i> plus presentation and serving of food for donation to flood victims. I contributed with a brief presentation on my work and to make presence known.	
21 October 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion - Events - Culture - Collaborations 		

27 October 2014			Virtual Mobilization: <i>Twitterstorm</i> Promotion of Kashmir's 'Black Day' or day of accession to India
28 October 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Lobbying - Speakers - Culture - Awareness Raising 		
4 February 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lobbying - Culture - Awareness Raising/Promotion in video - Discussion Alleged Perpetrators - India/Pakistan - Collaborations - Lobbying 		
4 November 2014		Joint event with iSoc: 'Kashmir not a Sweater: An insight into the Kashmiri Struggle against Occupation and Oppression' Committee member presentation and I gave brief presentation on Human rights in IAK and my research	
11 November 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Speakers - Cultural - Collaborations - Awareness raising - Fundraising - Demonstration - Lobbying 		

18 November 2014	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Speakers - Culture - Collaborations (other soc/KSM) - Awareness raising - Lobbying 		
2 December 2014		Cultures of Resistance Mix of presentations on Kashmir culture along with awareness raising of conflicts in IAK and Palestine (I read a cultural poem)	
2 February 2015	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Speakers - Culture - Collaborations (esp. FemSoc/SJP) - Awareness raising - Hate messages - Promotion (flyers/social media) - Demonstrations 		
4 February 2015		KSM and FemSoc event 'Institutional Sexual Violence in Kashmir'	
23 February 2015	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Speakers - Cultural - Collaborations - Awareness raising - Fundraising - Promotion - AGM - Research update 		

5 March 2015		Film Screening 'Valley of Saints'	
16 March 2015			Organizational meeting in conjunction with SACC: Update on IAK HR situation; Planning for joint event; Lobbying against Prevent Legislation
23 March 2015			Annual General Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Films - Events - Promotion (campus/social media) - Expansion - other KSMS - Speakers - Culture - Collaborations (other society and other KSM) - Awareness raising - Lobbying efforts - Recommendations - Bookkeeping

Appendix 1b: SOAS Meetings and Event

Date	Meeting	Event	Other
26 September 2015			SOAS Freshers Fayre Committee members handed out information about the society and postcards for a mail-in campaign against Human Rights abuses. I introduced myself and assisted.
13 October 2015		KSM SOAS Meet and Greet Several presentations on Kashmir, exp. From different sides and poetry; discussion on what it means to be Kashmir, activism, etc.	
14 October 2015			Coffee meeting with member of committee – discussed my research and issues in Kashmir activism
16 October 2015	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Social - Films - Speakers - Resistance - Awareness Raising - Collaboration (soc/Kashmir orgs) - Promotion (social media) 		
27 October 2015		Film Screening: <i>Inshallah Football</i> Q&A with director and academic presentation	

30 October 2015	Planning Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events - Films - Promotion (soc media and physical) - Awareness Raising - Collaborations (other socs/Kashmir) - Fundraising - Occupied vs. Administered 		
10 November 2015		'We Need to Talk About Modi' panel event from different societies and perspectives. Dalits and Subaltern solidarity; KSM rep; video shown incriminating Modi in Gujarat riots	
12 November 2015			Modi Not Welcome Very large demonstration and march from Downing Street in London. Reps from many org. I helped to make placards and to hold signs for KSM SOAS
23 November 2015			Oppressed Peoples in Solidarity joint event , collections for Calais. (Kashmir, Kurdistan, Palestine, Tibet socs). During time I went, no KSM members but Palestine and Kurdistan reps discussed
15 February 2016		Jammu and Kashmir: Past and Present Activist and academic discussion, this time in collaboration with King's College London KSM	

		newly formed group – location at King's College	
16 February 2016		<p>Kashmir Women's Resistance: A deliberation on the gendered nature of the conflict</p> <p>More academic but also activist discussion, paired with photo exhibition</p>	
17 February 2016		<p>Kashmir: Road to Peace in South Asia</p> <p>Academic and Activist discussion on how peace in SA can be achieved only through sustainable solutions on Kashmir</p>	
18 February 2016		<p>Jammu and Kashmir: Conflicting Perspectives</p> <p>Activist and Academic discussion on Kashmir conflict</p>	

Appendix 1c Encounters in Indian Administered Kashmir

Date of meetings/encounters in IAK	Although mostly interviews were used in this thesis, the pilot study in Indian Administered Kashmir did produce the following encounters:
14 May 2013	Met with Academic at Kashmir University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An unplanned meeting, the Professor gave me a vague background on the Kashmir conflict; recommended I attend a book launch
15 May 2013	Book Launch by A.G. Noorani (2013) <i>The Kashmir Dispute, 1947-2012</i> at Nigeeen Club <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required a translator. Praise for book and <i>Great Kashmir</i> newspaper
17 May 2013	Meeting arranged at coffee shop in Srinagar Coffee Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Met with two journalists who discussed intractability of conflict due to unwillingness and financial gain of some stakeholders; thought CBMs useless to ordinary people
17 May 2013	Meeting with Senior journalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More in-depth interview giving perspective of on-going conflict, suppression, and abuse by security forces. Took special interest in how youths have suffered
18 May 2013	Meeting with a second Senior journalist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My contacts snowballed to be introduced to more journalists. This journalist discussed similarly to previous journalist who later joined. Themes were again youth volatility/witnessing conflict and huge protests. Also concern over conflict spillover from Afghanistan, support for militancy
19 May 2013	An arranged elite meeting was canceled due to a house arrest. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Police interrogated myself and companion briefly in the street. - Later I ran into another officer I was acquainted with at a Chinese restaurant. Over soup, was an impromptu interview. The officer suggested a soft borders approach and claimed it could be done if political will existed. Described personal tragedy and defended police record.
20 May 2013	Visit to Bemina Rehabilitation Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My host took me to spinal injuries unit where a patient sought treatment from being shot by security officers. Later in limb rehabilitation unit, interviewed elderly man who receiving prosthetic leg from International Red Cross 10 years after losing it in cross border shelling.
20 May 2013	Meeting with Journalist who gathered two young men for interview

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting detailed in thesis – two youths detained describe their experiences of internment.
20 May 2013	<p>Met with Kashmir University scholars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed research with some professors and a PhD student. They offered to permit me access to their facilities and encouraged me to apply for a longer visa to research. Claimed that Institute of Kashmir Studies was a think tank and any solution on Kashmir would come from it. Was suggested to apply for a visa under a different research topic.
22 May 2013	<p>Met with one more journalist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Already reaching saturation. The journalist discusses Kashmir conflict in general and intractability and unwillingness to negotiate settlement
22 May 2013	<p>Met with research student over lunch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - was skeptical that an independent Kashmir would be Islamic or undemocratic - later took pictures of pro-azadi graffiti by the river.